



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 757

Resolution honoring the life and accomplishments of Ms. Geraldine Ferraro.

By Council Members Comrie, Brewer, Cabrera, Chin, Dickens, Fidler, Garodnick, Gentile, Gonzalez, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Mealy, Mendez, Palma, Van Bramer, Vann, Williams, Mark-Viverito and Koo

Whereas, Geraldine Anne Ferraro was the youngest child, and only girl, born to Italian immigrants Dominick and Antonetta Ferraro on August 26, 1935 in Newburgh New York; and

Whereas, After Dominick Ferraro died of a heart attack in 1943, Antonetta moved herself and three children to the Bronx; and

Whereas, As a child, Geraldine attended Marymount Catholic School in Tarrytown, New York where she excelled academically and accelerated to an early graduation from high school at the age of 16; and

Whereas, Ms. Ferraro's scholastic excellence and hard work earned her an academic scholarship to Marymount College; and

Whereas, At Marymount College, Ms. Ferraro majored in English, was editor of the school newspaper and graduated in 1956; and

Whereas, During her school years, her family moved again, this time to the borough of Queens which would become her longtime and beloved home; and

Whereas, After graduating from Marymount, Ms. Ferraro went on to teach elementary school at P.S. 85 in Astoria, Queens; and

Whereas, At a time when women lawyers were still uncommon, and while still teaching, Ms. Ferraro attended Fordham Law School at night and earned her law degree in 1960; and

Whereas, On July 16, 1960, several days after taking the New York State Bar exam, Ms. Ferraro

married John Zaccaro; and

Whereas, The couple went on to have three children, Donna, John and Laura who they raised in Queens; and

Whereas, While raising her children, Ms. Ferraro practiced law and took on pro bono cases representing women in need in Family Court; and

Whereas, During this time, Ms. Ferraro dabbled in local politics and was elected president of the Queens County Women's Bar Association in 1970; and

Whereas, In 1974, Ms. Ferraro started working as an assistant district attorney in the Queens District Attorney's (DA) office; and

Whereas, While working at the Queens DA's office, she was put in charge of the Special Victims Bureau and the Confidential Unit, which prosecuted such crimes as rape, sexual assault, child abuse and domestic violence; and

Whereas, The work she did within the DA's office had a profound impact upon her worldview, and as she would later say, was the impetus for her originally moderate views becoming more liberal; and

Whereas, After working several years in the District Attorney's office, she earned a solid reputation as a tenacious prosecutor and tireless advocate for the victims she represented; and

Whereas, In 1978, Ms. Ferraro set sights on an open Congressional seat in her own district, and was elected as United States Representative in the 9th Congressional District; and

Whereas, Congress Member Ferraro served on various Congressional Committees including the Public Works Committee, the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, the Select Committee on Aging, and the House Budget Committee; and

Whereas, While in Congress, Representative Ferraro spearheaded efforts to achieve passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and also sponsored the Women's Economic Equity Act in 1984, which ended pension discrimination against women, provided job options for displaced homemakers, and enabled homemakers to

open IRAs; and

Whereas, In addition, she was appointed to head the Democratic platform committee for the 1984 Presidential election, which highlighted her strong leadership skills and deep commitment to Democratic values; and

Whereas, Representative Ferraro was then tapped by Democratic Presidential candidate Walter Mondale to be the first woman vice presidential candidate for a major party; and

Whereas, Ms. Ferraro's nomination electrified politics and served as an historic turning point in the modern women's movement; and

Whereas, Her nomination exhilarated women and girls at a time when obstacles to professional success often seemed insurmountable; and

Whereas, Ms. Ferraro showed that women did and could continue to make hard-fought gains with perseverance; and

Whereas, Geraldine Ferraro's unwavering commitment and advocacy for human rights led to her appointment by President William J. Clinton as a United States Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission where she was a strong voice for the oppressed; and

Whereas, While at this post she was vice chair of the U.S. Delegation to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September, 1995; and

Whereas, Throughout her life, Geraldine A. Ferraro paved her own way using hard work, determination, humility and humor, and through her actions inspired untold numbers of girls and women; and

Whereas, Geraldine A. Ferraro was a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, lawyer, congresswoman, vice presidential candidate, native New Yorker, icon of the modern women's movement and a representative of true American spirit; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors the life and accomplishments of Ms. Geraldine Ferraro.

JP
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3/31/11