



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0910-2003, **Version:** *

Preconsidered Res. No. 910

Resolution mourning the death and celebrating the life, legacy and accomplishments of renowned leader, mentor, activist and human and civil rights advocate, Walter Sisulu.

By Council Members Perkins, Barron, Boyland, Comrie, Rivera, Sanders, Serrano, Vann, Weprin and Jackson

Whereas, Walter Sisulu, a charismatic, soft-spoken leader who helped lead the fight against racial apartheid in South Africa for five decades, died on May 6, 2003, at the age of 90, after battling a long illness; and

Whereas, Born on May 18, 1912, in the same year that the African National Congress ("ANC") was founded, Walter Sisulu was an eminent and world renowned freedom fighter who was the organizational genius of the ANC, and was responsible for mentoring Nelson Mandela in his youth and introducing Mr. Mandela to the ANC; and

Whereas, The development of the ANC into a mass movement can be traced to the establishment of the ANC Youth League, formed in 1943 by Walter Sisulu and a group of radicals who advocated militant action-including boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience-in pursuit of freedom from white domination and the attainment of political independence; and

Whereas, Walter Sisulu was instrumental in bringing the ANC to the watershed 1949 conference where the Program of Action was approved and Mr. Sisulu was elected ANC Secretary General, a post he held until 1954 when banning orders forced him to resign the position; and
Whereas, Walter Sisulu was the moving spirit behind all the great campaigns in the 1950's, as well as a leader in the transformation of the ANC to an organization of underground work and armed struggle, and who eventually, along with Nelson Mandela, worked to transform the ANC from a banned liberation movement into the nation's governing party; and

Whereas, Walter Sisulu was jailed numerous times for his political views and forceful advocacy, and in 1964, was arrested along with Nelson Mandela and other leaders and sentenced to life in prison, where he remained until his release in 1989, after serving 25 years in prison; and
Whereas, Walter Sisulu was a man of tremendous integrity, vision and courage who did much to end apartheid by remaining the clear thinking strategist behind the scenes, while Nelson Mandela became the public face of resistance and eventually the nation's first black leader; and
Whereas, Walter Sisulu's outstanding contributions were also due to the heroic sacrifices and support of his wife, Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu, a brave woman who worked as a State-registered nurse and midwife to support her family, was a member of the ANC Women's League and a founding member of the Federation of South African Women and who was jailed numerous times during the struggle to end apartheid; and
Whereas, Today, we honor the memory of Walter Sisulu, a man of great dignity and warmth whose dedication to the cause of freedom made him one of the most esteemed, enduring and inspirational leaders of the 20th century; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York mourns the death and celebrates the life, legacy and accomplishments of renowned leader, mentor, activist and human and civil rights advocate, Walter Sisulu.

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