



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 50

Resolution honoring the life and achievements of feminist author Betty Friedan.

By Council Members Dickens, Fidler, Foster, James, Koppell, Lappin, Mark-Viverito, Mendez, Recchia Jr., Sanders Jr., Sears, Weprin, White Jr. and Yassky

Whereas, Betty Friedan was born Bettye Naomi Goldstein in Peoria, Illinois on February 4, 1921; and

Whereas, In 1938, Ms. Friedan graduated high school as class valedictorian; and

Whereas, Ms. Friedan attended Smith College, where she edited a campus newspaper and graduated summa cum laude in 1942; and

Whereas, After graduation, Ms. Friedan received a research fellowship to study psychology at the University of California at Berkeley; and

Whereas, Ms. Friedan left Berkeley to work as a journalist in New York City; and

Whereas, Ms. Friedan married in 1947, and during the next ten years, gave birth to three children, Daniel, Jonathan and Emily; and

Whereas, Ms. Friedan wrote freelance magazine articles and researched the role that American society assigned to women while raising her children; and

Whereas, At a 15 year college reunion, Ms. Friedan conducted interviews with some fellow Smith College graduates, many of whom had become suburban homemakers and mothers; and

Whereas, These interviews gave birth to Ms. Friedan's 1963 book, The Feminist Mystique, widely regarded as the catalyst for the modern women's movement; and

Whereas, The Feminist Mystique not only sparked the modern feminist movement, but also gave a voice to untold numbers of women, providing them with hope and courage to change their lives for the better;

and

Whereas, In 1966, Ms. Friedan helped found the National Organization for Women (NOW), and served as its president for its first three years; and

Whereas, NOW's founding statement demanded full equality for women in American society and, under Ms. Friedan's leadership, led the fight for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; and

Whereas, In 1970, on the 50th anniversary of women's suffrage, Ms. Friedan led the National Women's Strike for Equality; and

Whereas, In 1972, Ms. Friedan along with Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisholm and Gloria Steinem, formed the National Women's Political Caucus; and

Whereas, For many years thereafter, Ms. Freidan was a tireless advocate for equality, and spent much time lecturing and teaching at various educational institutions across the country, including at Cornell University, where she started the world's first department in women's studies; and

Whereas, Betty Freidan was a great author, philosopher, educator and leader, whose intellect and spirit improved the lives of generations of women; and

Whereas, On February 4, 2006, her 85th birthday, Betty Friedan died in her Washington home; and

Whereas, Ms. Freidan will long be remembered not only as a mother, grandmother, friend, philosopher, author, educator and leader of the feminist movement, but also as a woman who helped change the course of the 20th century; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the New York City Council honors the life and achievements of feminist author Betty Friedan.