



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0208-2004, **Version:** \*

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### Res. No. 208

Resolution honoring the life of Nuyorican poet and playwright Pedro “El Reverendo” Pietri.

By Council Members Serrano, Rivera, Clarke, Gerson, Martinez, Monserrate, Reed, Sanders, Vann, Palma and Weprin

Whereas, Pedro Pietri, a renowned Nuyorican poet and playwright, died on March 3, 2004, at the age of 59; and

Whereas, Mr. Pietri was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico on March 21, 1944, and emigrated with his family to New York City when he was 3 years-old, initially living in the Grant Houses, a public housing project on Amsterdam Avenue in Harlem; and

Whereas, Mr. Pietri is a product of the New York City public school system, attending Haaren High School on West 58<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in Manhattan, where he began composing poetry as a teenager; and

Whereas, After high school, Mr. Pietri was drafted into the United States Army, serving with a light infantry brigade in the Vietnam War from 1966-1968, an experience that Mr. Pietri described as further radicalizing him; and

Whereas, Upon his return from serving in the Vietnam War, Mr. Pietri dedicated himself to composing poetry full-time, eventually writing poems and plays that chronicled the struggles and aspirations of the Puerto Rican community living in New York City; and

Whereas, In 1969, Mr. Pietri made the first public reading of one of his poems, Puerto Rican Obituary, a poem about the lives of five Puerto Ricans who had migrated to United States with dreams that had remained unfulfilled; and

Whereas, Puerto Rican Obituary, the first of more than 20 books of poetry and plays by Mr. Pietri, was published by the Monthly Review Press in 1973, and is to this day acknowledged as his best known work, currently in its tenth printing and translated into 13 different languages; and

Whereas, Mr. Pietri was also one of the founders of the Nuyorican poetry movement, helping to start the Nuyorican Poets Café on the Lower East Side in Manhattan during the 1970’s; and

Whereas, During his career, Mr. Pietri received numerous honors, including several New York State

Creative Arts in Public Service grants and a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts; and

Whereas, Mr. Pietri has been described as the “quintessential Nuyorican poetic voice” by Professor Juan Flores of the City University of New York’s Hunter College and Graduate Center, who is currently working on an anthology of Mr. Pietri’s work; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors the life of Nuyorican poet and playwright Pedro “El Reverendo” Pietri.

LS#617

RA

3/5/2004

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