



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 771

Resolution mourning the death and celebrating the life of native Bronxite Jerry Orbach, star of stage, screen and television.

By Council Members Rivera, Barron, Fidler, Foster, Gerson, Nelson, Palma, Quinn, Reed, Vallone Jr., Weprin, Baez, Koppell and Gennaro

Whereas, Jerome “Jerry” Orbach was a tremendously gifted entertainer whose career spanned fifty years, and whose versatility earned him critical and popular acclaim as a stage, film and television actor; and

Whereas, Born in the Bronx in 1935, Jerome Orbach moved with his family to Illinois as a young man, and returned to our City in 1955, where he almost immediately found a job as the understudy for the role of the Street Singer in a touted off-Broadway production of “The Threepenny Opera”; and

Whereas, This was an auspicious beginning to what would eventually become a hugely successful career, one in which Mr. Orbach solidified his reputation as one of the most original performers on the New York stage; and

Whereas, This is particularly true of Mr. Orbach’s work in the musical theater. In diverse and challenging roles, from playing the corrupt, smooth-talking lawyer Billy Flynn in Bob Fosse’s 1975 production of the musical “Chicago,” to his legendary performance as the bossy director in David Merrick’s Broadway version of the movie “42nd Street,” Jerry Orbach’s talent and originality were constantly on display and helped established him as a bona fide leading man of the stage; and

Whereas, After conquering the Broadway stage, Jerry Orbach crossed-over into film and the world of television. It is in the latter category that he gained global recognition, becoming known for his role of the cynical, world-weary New York Detective Lennie Briscoe, a performance he honed to understated perfection

during 12 seasons on the hit television series “Law & Order; and

Whereas, Mr. Orbach’s obituary in the New York Times stated that [he] “came to embody two beloved New York archetypes: the musical matinee idol, top which he gave a refreshingly modern spin with his rugged and idiosyncratic persona, and the shrewd, irascible cop.”

Whereas, Jerry Orbach’s performances, whether on stage, in film or on television, earned him a reputation as a serious professional, an actor wholly dedicated to his craft, admired and respected by his peers and legions of his fans; and

Whereas, Jerry Orbach’s career inspired countless persons by exemplifying the value of dedication and perseverance; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York mourns the death and celebrates the life of Jerry Orbach who passed away on December 28, 2004.

WA
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1/12/05