



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0829-2005, Version: *

Res. No. 829

Resolution honoring the life and achievements of actor and activist Ossie Davis.

By Council Members Clarke, Foster, Avella, Barron, Brewer, Comrie, Fidler, Gennaro, Gentile, Gerson, Gonzalez, James, Jennings, Katz, Koppell, Liu, Lopez, Martinez, McMahon, Nelson, Palma, Perkins, Quinn, Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Sears, Stewart, Weprin and Reed

Whereas, Ossie Davis, the legendary actor and activist who influenced generations with his professional achievements and humanitarian causes, died on February 4, 2005 at the age of 87; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis was born in Cogdell, Georgia on December 18, 1917, the son of a railroad engineer and the oldest of five children; and

Whereas, After earning a degree at Howard University, Mr. Davis moved to New York City to embark upon a writing and acting career and studied drama with Harlem's Rose McClendon Players; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis served his nation honorably in World War II as a surgical technician, where he developed his writing ability by creating shows for his fellow troops; and

Whereas, After his service in World War II, Mr. Davis returned to United States and made his Broadway debut in 1946 appearing in "Jeb Turner;" and

Whereas, In 1948, Mr. Davis married the actress Ruby Dee and together they would go on to form one of the greatest husband-and-wife teams in entertainment history; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis began his cinema career in 1950, appearing with his wife in the film "No Way Out;" and

Whereas, Mr. Davis also starred in films like "The Cardinal" and "The Hill," and also appeared in numerous television shows, including the acclaimed detective drama "The Outsider" and as a cast member of

“The Defenders” series; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis became a major force in the theater world when he wrote the hit Broadway musical “Purlie Victorious,” and was an acclaimed director of stage and screen, best known for his direction of the popular “Cotton Comes To Harlem;” and

Whereas, Mr. Davis also founded the innovative Third World Cinema Production Company, which assists African-American and Latino filmmakers; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis and his wife were introduced to a whole new generation of fans through his collaborations with director Spike Lee in such films as “Do The Right Thing,” “Jungle Fever” and “Get On The Bus,” and by appearing on stage and screen in “I’m Not Rappaport,” “Miss Evers Boys,” “Evening Shade,” “Roots” and “12 Angry Men;” and

Whereas, Throughout his career, Mr. Davis branched out beyond his role as an artist and embraced the African-American struggle for equality, by being a highly visible member of the civil rights movement with his support of Paul Robeson, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and in his later years, as an outspoken proponent against apartheid in South Africa and for diversity in the entertainment industry; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis was the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the NAACP Image Hall of Fame, the Theater Hall of Fame and the National Medal of Arts Award; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis was the loving husband of Ruby Dee for over 55 years, the father of three children, Nora, Hasna and Guy and the grandfather of seven; and

Whereas, Mr. Davis was an inspiration to all who saw him perform or watched him take up humanitarian causes for the betterment of his community; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors the life and achievements of actor and activist Ossie Davis.

LS#2420

RA

2/11/2005

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