



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1076

Resolution calling for the Council of the City of New York to highlight and honor the life and achievements of entertainer Luther Vandross

By Council Members Clarke, Barron, Comrie, Gerson, Gonzalez, McMahon, Sanders Jr. and Weprin

Whereas, Luther Vandross, the legendary singer and entertainer who influenced generations with his musical talents and charitable causes, died on July 1, 2005 at the age of 54; and

Whereas, Born in New York City on April 20, 1951 as the youngest of four children, Luther Vandross attended Taft High School in the Bronx while developing his love for music as a member of the Apollo Theater's musical theater workshop, Listen My Brother. Mr. Vandross briefly attended Western Michigan University before embarking upon a professional singing career; and

Whereas, Luther Vandross began his career as a songwriter when he wrote "Everybody Rejoice" for the Broadway musical "The Wiz" in 1972; his biggest break came when he became a backup singer for British rock star David Bowie. He then became the most sought-after backup singer and arranger in the 70's, going on to work with artists such as Bette Midler, Barbra Streisand and Roberta Flack; and

Whereas, After signing with Epic Records in 1981, Luther Vandross released his 1981 debut album "Never Too Much", which reached the top of the

R&B charts and sold more than one million copies. Mr. Vandross followed this success with a string of R&B hit albums through the 80's, which included memorable songs such as "Here & Now", "Forever, For Always, For Love", "Give Me The Reason", "If Only For One Night" and "Any Love", propelling Mr. Vandross to superstardom and helping him become the voice of his generation; and

Whereas, Mr. Vandross experienced his greatest mainstream success in the 90's with a series of duet hits, such as "Endless Love" with Mariah Carey and "The Best Things In Life Are Free" with Janet Jackson; and his successful albums "Never Let Me Go" and "Power of Love" established his legend as a remarkable romantic balladeer of love songs; and

Whereas, Mr. Vandross won numerous awards and accolades throughout his career, including eight Grammy awards, several Soul Train, BET, NAACP Image and American Music Awards. While recovering from a stroke in 2003, he experienced his greatest professional success with the release of "Dance With My Father", which generated worldwide sales exceeding 3 million copies and earning the Grammy award for Song of the Year in 2004; and

Whereas, In his personal life Luther Vandross was a tremendous benefactor to others, giving his time and money to several charitable causes; he was an inspiration to all who ever heard him sing in person or listened to one of his songs at a wedding or on a romantic evening. Mr. Vandross was a native son of our great City whose unparalleled talent allowed him to champion that which we all cherish- the emotion of love; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors the life and legend of Luther Vandross.

