



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1221-2005, Version: *

Res. No. 1221

Resolution commemorating the life and mourning the death of Nipsey Russell.

By Council Members Perkins, Barron, Clarke, Fidler, Foster, Gennaro, James, McMahon, Nelson, Palma, Sanders Jr., Sears, Vann, Weprin and Jackson

Whereas, Nipsey Russell, the actor, comedian and poet, died on October 2, 2005, at the age of 80; and

Whereas, Nipsey Russell was born in Atlanta, Georgia on October 13, 1924, and was only three years old when he began his stage career as part of a tap dance act called The Ragamuffins of Rhythm; and

Whereas, After graduating from high school in Atlanta, Nipsey Russell attended the University of Cincinnati, where he earned a Bachelors Degree in English; and

Whereas, Nipsey Russell served as a Captain in the United States Army during World War II; and

Whereas, After his service in the United States Army, Nipsey Russell settled in New York, where he rose to fame as a nightclub performer at Harlem's Club Baby Grand and became known as "Harlem's Son of Fun;" and

Whereas, In 1957, Nipsey Russell made his first of many appearances on "The Ed Sullivan Show," an exposure that he used to eventually obtain appearances on hit variety and talk shows, such as "The Jackie Gleason Show," "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson," "The Dean Martin Show" and "Laugh-In;" and

Whereas, Nipsey Russell achieved his first major television role when he played Officer Anderson in the 1961 series "Car 54, Where Are You?;" and

Whereas, Nipsey Russell became the first black performer to become a regular panelist on a weekly network television game show when he joined ABC's "Missing Links" in 1964; and

Whereas, During the 1970's, Nipsey Russell was a frequent guest on the popular television games

shows “To Tell the Truth,” “Match Game” and “The \$10,000 Pyramid,” and until two years ago appeared in the “Hollywood Squares;” and

Whereas, Nipsey Russell was a trained dancer and received critical acclaim for his role as the Tin Man in the 1978 film “The Wiz;” and

Whereas, Nipsey Russell also appeared in a number of big screen movies including “Fame,” “Nemo,” “Wildcats, “Posse” and “Car 54;” and

Whereas, Nipsey Russell’s poetic delivery earned him the nickname the “Poet Laureate of Television,” a distinction that allowed him to take his signature four-line poetry on the road for readings and performances; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York commemorates the life and mourns the death of Nipsey Russell.

LS#3581

RA

10/19/2005

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