

Resolution

Honoring the life and legacy of former Council President Anna Verna, a political trailblazer and beloved public servant, on the occasion of her passing

WHEREAS, Anna C. Verna was born and raised in the Point Breeze neighborhood of South Philadelphia, to parents William and Pauline Cibotti. Her parents were deeply involved with their South Philadelphia community and taught Anna the importance of public service from an early age; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Verna began her noteworthy 60-year career with the City of Philadelphia in February of 1951. After 17 years with the City, including working in the office of District Attorney and for the future Mayor Dilworth, Verna's father William was elected to serve as Councilman for the 2nd District in 1968. Mrs. Verna served as an assistant and close advisor to her father, and her passion for public service quickly endeared her to constituents across the District; and

WHEREAS, When William Cibotti passed away suddenly in 1975, residents and community leaders from across the 2nd Council District appealed to Mrs. Verna to run for election. After a successful campaign, Mrs. Verna began her tenure on Council in 1975, a post which she would hold for 36 years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Verna's career in Council was marked by her devotion to creating opportunities for all citizens in the 2nd Council District and the City of Philadelphia as a whole. She was a strong proponent of policies designed to encourage job growth and economic opportunity and fought to create a tax environment in Philadelphia that could encourage growth and revitalize the City; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Verna was also an advocate for affordable housing programs and other neighborhood development initiatives, facilitating the development of hundreds of affordable housing units across the 2nd Council District. She also advocated for the creation of the City's Housing Trust Fund and sponsored an initiative to provide tax relief for senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, After distinguishing herself during her early years in Council through hard work, perseverance, and integrity, Mrs. Verna rose to the position of Majority Leader, and also served as Chair of Council's Finance Committee in 1991. As Finance Chair, Mrs. Verna provided crucial leadership as the City worked to restore fiscal stability, avoid potential bankruptcy, and for over \$1 billion in savings for Philadelphia taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, Mrs. Verna shattered a notable glass ceiling in Philadelphia when she became the first woman ever elected to serve as City Council President. Over the course of her 12-year Presidency in Council, the longest in the body's history, she earned the respect and admiration of colleagues and constituents from across the City. Mrs. Verna overcame many obstacles and blazed trails for the future women of Council; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her role as Council President, Mrs. Verna was an active member of the Philadelphia Italian-American community. She was honored with the title of “Commendatore” by the Republic of Italy for her contributions to the Italian American community in the City. Furthermore, Mrs. Verna was awarded honorary doctorates from Chestnut Hill College and the Community College of Philadelphia. She has also served on the boards of the Franklin Institute, the Philadelphia Art Museum, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and several other organizations in and around the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, When Mrs. Verna retired from elective office in 2011, she was not only the longest-tenured Councilmember, but she was also the longest-tenured employee in the entire City. She enjoyed a well-deserved retirement in which she remained active in her community and a trusted source of counsel to elected officials and civic leaders alike, and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Verna’s remarkable 60-year career in public service stands as a testament to her dedication to the City of Philadelphia, and this Council body is proud to celebrate her life in service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors the life and legacy of former Council President Anna Verna, a political trailblazer and beloved public servant, on the occasion of her passing

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Council President Anna C. Verna, as evidence of the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.

Introduced by Kenyatta Johnson, 2nd District Councilmember