



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0198, Version: 0

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill

Introduced by: Councilmember Stokes

A Bill Entitled

An Ordinance concerning

City Property - Naming the Baltimore City Health Department Building to the Dr. Maxie T. Collier Health Department Building

For the purpose of naming the Baltimore City Health Department Building, located at 1001 East Fayette Street, to the Dr. Maxie T. Collier Health Department Building.

By authority of

Article 5 - Finance, Property, and Procurement
Section 20-2
Baltimore City Code
(Edition 2000)

Recitals

Dr. Maxie T. Collier is a Baltimore hero. The first black Commissioner of the Baltimore City Health Department, a staunch advocate of mental health services for black residents of Baltimore City, and an early champion of needle-exchange programs to prevent the spread of HIV, Dr. Collier deserves Baltimore's deep love and respect.

"I will remember Maxie as a brilliant psychiatrist and a caring and compassionate public health official," said former Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke, quoted in Dr. Collier's obituary published by the Baltimore Sun on April 23, 1994, on the event of Dr. Collier's untimely death at the age of 49.

In 1984, observing widespread misdiagnoses by practitioners and a lingering stigma towards mental health treatment in the black community that kept individuals with mental illness from seeking care Dr. Collier, together with Fikre Workneh, MSW and Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, founded the Black Mental Health Alliance ("BMHA"). For over 30 years BHMA has worked to promote awareness of the needs of minorities coping with mental illness and offer culturally responsive information, support, and referrals to individuals and families.

During his tenure as Baltimore City Health Commissioner from 1987 to 1990, Dr. Collier created "The Baltimore Project," a novel prenatal care project aimed at reducing infant mortality and future unwanted pregnancies.

In 1989, early in the fight to stop the spread of HIV among intravenous drug uses, Dr. Collier advocated for the City to establish its first needle exchange program. Eventually launched in November 1994, the Baltimore Needle and Syringe Exchange Program is still active after nearly 30 years thanks to the initial efforts of Dr. Collier. Quoted in the Sun’s obituary of Dr. Collier, David Vlahow, then an associate professor for epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health said “I think a lot of efforts coming to fruition now were due in large part to the courageous public health effort on [Dr. Collier’s] part[.]”

A native of Waverly, Tennessee, Dr. Collier graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1967 and from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1977. Dr. Collier began his private practice in 1980 where he offered his expertise in the areas of family therapy, individual psychodynamic therapy, and forensic psychiatry. In 1987, Dr. Collier became the Chief of Psychiatry for the Johns Hopkins Health Plan where he was responsible for the management and supervision of mental health services including outpatient treatment, inpatient admission, and rehabilitative services. From 1987 to 1990 Dr. Collier served as the first black Commissioner of Health for Baltimore City. In addition to his many professional activities, Dr. Collier was an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

Dr. Collier was a devoted husband, father, professor, and a pioneering public health advocate in the areas of black mental health, prenatal care, and HIV prevention. Dr. Maxie T. Collier will always be a Baltimore hero.

Section 1. Be it ordained by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That the name of the Baltimore City Health Department Building, located at 1001 East Fayette Street, is named the Dr. Maxie T. Collier Health Department Building.

Section 2. And be it further ordained, That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day after the date it is enacted.