

CITY OF BALTIMORE
RESOLUTION _____
Council Bill 08-0211

Introduced by: Councilmember Curran, President Rawlings-Blake, Councilmembers Reisinger, Kraft, D'Adamo, Henry, Spector, Middleton, Conaway, Holton, Welch, Cole, Young, Branch, and Clarke

Introduced and read first time: September 22, 2008

Read second time: September 22, 2008

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CONCERNING

**In Tribute to the Honorable Kenneth N. Harris, Sr. – A Distinguished Son
of Baltimore City Gone Far too Soon**

FOR the purpose of paying tribute to Ken Harris, our dear friend; expressing appreciation for his many years of dedicated public service to the citizens of the City of his birth; acknowledging his strength of character that carried him from personal poverty to political purpose; offering the deepest sympathy to his loving family, loyal friends, and dedicated colleagues on the sad occasion of his untimely and senseless death; and urging the citizens of Baltimore City to unite to secure the better future that Ken envisioned for us all; and providing for a special effective date.

Recitals

When gunmen took the life of Kenneth Harris in the early morning hours of September 20, in the words of the Mayor of Baltimore City: “Our City lost a committed advocate for people who didn’t always have a voice. When it came to young people, people losing their homes and people who just needed a little help – Ken was always there, speaking up for them and asking all of us to do what was right.”

Ironically, in his more than 8 years of service on the City Council, one of Ken’s main legislative quests was making this City a safer place, to protect all the citizens, particularly those of the North and Northeast Baltimore neighborhoods he represented, from the kind of senseless violence that took his life. He sought to keep young people off the streets that spawned such violence by championing the Baltimore Truancy Assessment Centers to counsel and provide needed social services to youth who are ‘skipping’ class.

An outspoken advocate for public safety, he frequently took an interest in law enforcement and crime issues, challenging the Police Department to provide the best possible public service, to be prudent in charging youth with minor offenses that jeopardized their jobs and education, to desist in the practice of mass arrests in poorer neighborhoods, to avoid quota arrests, and following the death of a suspect, he was one of the first in the country to call for hearings on the indiscriminate use of the controversial Taser.

Born to poverty in West Baltimore, Ken worked hard to achieve higher education and to provide a good quality of life for his beloved family. Despite his personal accomplishments,

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken by amendment.

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1 however, he never forgot those fighting to escape the City’s “mean streets”. His legislative
2 successes included a measure requiring landlords to store the belongings of the tenants they
3 evicted for non-payment and requiring the builders of the new hotel near the convention center
4 to dedicate millions of dollars for scholarships.

5 In assuring Ken’s family during this difficult time that the entire Council’s thoughts and
6 prayers are with them, the President of the City Council stated the heartfelt sentiment of all:
7 “Ken Harris was a wonderful public servant who always put the interests of his constituents first.
8 Ken was always a gentleman, and a true servant to the citizens of Baltimore. I’m confident that
9 those responsible for this senseless killing will be brought to justice.”

10 **SECTION 1. BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That
11 this Body hereby, with heavy hearts, pays tribute to Ken Harris, our dear friend; expresses
12 appreciation for his many years of dedicated public service to the citizens of the City of his birth;
13 acknowledges his strength of character that carried him from personal poverty to political
14 purpose; offers the deepest sympathy to his loving family, loyal friends, and dedicated
15 colleagues on the sad occasion of his untimely and senseless death; and urges the citizens of
16 Baltimore City to unite to secure the better future that Ken envisioned for us all.

17 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to his
18 loving family, wife, Mrs. Annette Harris, and children Nicole and Kenneth, Jr.

19 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this Resolution takes effect on the date it
20 is enacted.

Certified as duly passed this _____ day of _____, 20__

President, Baltimore City Council

Certified as duly delivered to Her Honor, the Mayor,

this _____ day of _____, 20__

Chief Clerk

Approved this _____ day of _____, 20__

Mayor, Baltimore City