



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill

Introduced by: Councilmember Costello, President Young

A Bill Entitled

An Ordinance concerning

City Property - Naming the Building, Informally Known as the MECU Building, to be the Councilman Harry S. Cummings Building

For the purpose of naming the building located at 401 East Fayette Street, informally known as the MECU Building, the Councilman Harry S. Cummings Building.

By authority of

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

Recitals

Harry Sythe Cummings, Baltimore's first African-American Councilman, was born in Baltimore's Eleventh Ward, in 1866, and educated in Baltimore's public schools. In 1886, he graduated from Lincoln University, an institution of higher learning that was then known as the "Black Princeton" because of its Princeton-educated founder, its early faculty, and its rigorous classical curriculum. He then graduated from the University of Maryland Law School, in 1889, one of the first two African-Americans to do so.

His political career commenced in 1890, when he was elected to City Council from the Ward in which he was born. At that time, each Councilman selected a candidate for a full scholarship to the Maryland Institute. Harry Cummings selected Harry S. Pratt, an African-American. Maryland Institute refused to honor Pratt's scholarship, and Cummings then prevailed in the courts on behalf of this young man.

He was also known as the Father of Colored Polytechnic, for his efforts in promoting the establishment of the high school.

Although reelected in 1891, he lost in 1892, and was reelected in 1897. After that term expired, he practiced law and was later elected to a 4-year term in 1907, 1911, and again in 1915. In an era of intense racial discrimination, he worked hard on behalf of his constituents. It is fitting that a building be named to honor his accomplishment as the first

African-American member of the Baltimore City Council.

Section 1. Be it ordained by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That the building located at 401 East Fayette Street, informally known as the MECU Building, is named the Councilman Harry S. Cummings Building.

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