



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

File #: 15-0531, **Version:** 0

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL

Introduced by: Councilmember Kraft

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ORDINANCE concerning

City Property - Naming the Marble Fountain in Patterson Park to be the Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Memorial Fountain

FOR the purpose of naming the marble fountain in Patterson Park, located at the entrance on Patterson Park Avenue at Lombard Street, adjacent to the property known as 27 South Patterson Park Avenue, to be the Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Memorial Fountain.

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

Recitals

Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. was the first African American admitted to the Vanderbilt School of Medicine, in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1968, at the time that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered, he was still the only African American at that medical school. In 1970, he graduated from Vanderbilt and was the first African American to do so.

After graduation, he moved to Baltimore where he was the first African American intern at Johns Hopkins University Medical School. From 1973 to 1975, he studied at Harvard Medical School's Department of Physiology, performing breakthrough research into the role of the renin angiotensin system in congestive heart failure. When he returned to Johns Hopkins in 1975, he became the first African American chief resident in heart surgery at the university.

At Johns Hopkins in 1980, he was a pioneer in performing the first implantation of an automatic defibrillator, a small battery-powered device that detects arrhythmia in the heart and emits an electric shock to correct it and which has saved over a million lives in subsequent years.

Never forgetting his own experiences, as a member of the medical school's admissions committee, he focused on correcting the racial inequality in the student body. As a result of his efforts, by 1983, the number of African American students at the Hopkins Medical School had increased fivefold to 40, compared to the 8 students there in 1978.

Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. became a full professor of cardiac surgery in 1990. He was awarded a medal of honor as an outstanding alumnus by Vanderbilt and received honorary doctorates from Sojourner-Douglass College, Meharry Medical College, Spelman College, and Morgan State University. In 2010, he was awarded the Thurgood Marshall College Fund award for excellence in medicine.

He was also a great friend to Patterson Park and was a cofounder of the Park's Wine-Tasting at Sunset Fundraiser, now in its 11th year. He was a long-time supporter of the Friends of Patterson Park and an advocate for the importance of youth recreation opportunities.

Baltimore, the greater society, and Patterson Park are better because of Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Naming the marble fountain in his honor will keep him in our memories for future generations.

SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the marble fountain in Patterson Park, located at the entrance on Patterson Park Avenue at Lombard Street, adjacent to the property known as 27 South Patterson Park Avenue, is named the Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Memorial Fountain.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day after the date it is enacted.

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