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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

4

MEMORIAL SERVICE

5

COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN  
1914-2005

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Room 400, City Hall

8

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

9

Monday, October 17, 2005, 2:10 p.m.

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12 PRESENT:

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA  
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL

15

COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE

16

COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO

17

COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.

18

COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY

19

COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY

20

COUNCILWOMAN JOAN L. KRAJEWSKI

21

COUNCILMAN RICHARD T. MARIANO

22

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER

23

COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL

24

COUNCILMAN JUAN F. RAMOS

25

COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED-MILLER

COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS-BROWN

COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

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V A R A L L O Incorporated

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Litigation Support Services

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1835 Market Street, Suite 600

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

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215.561.2220

215.567.2670

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2 OPENING REMARKS:

3 Council President Anna C. Verna

4

INVOCATION:

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6 Reverend Isaac Miller  
Church of the Advocate

7

TRIBUTE:

8

9 Cantor Stephen Friedman  
Temple Sinai

10

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION:

11

12 Councilwoman Jannie L. Blackwell

13

READING OF RESOLUTION:

14

15 Patricia Rafferty  
Chief Clerk

16 INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS:

17 Council President Anna C. Verna

18

ADJOURNMENT:

19

20 Councilwoman Marian B. Tasco

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22

23

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2 GUEST SPEAKERS:

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4

Congressman Robert Brady

5

Mayor John F. Street

6

Councilwoman Jannie L. Blackwell

7

Councilwoman Marian B. Tasco

8

Councilman Brian J. O'Neill

Councilman Michael A. Nutter

Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown

Councilman W. Wilson Goode, Jr.

Councilman Juan F. Ramos

9

10

Representative Mark B. Cohen

Sherrie Cohen, Esquire

11

Angel L. Ortiz

12

Patrick Eiding, President, AFL-CIO

13

Burt Seigel, Executive Director  
(Jewish Community Relations Council)

14

15

Jonathan Stein, Esquire,  
(Community Legal Services)

16

Stanley Shapiro, Esquire

17

Christie Balka, Executive Director  
(Bread and Roses)

18

19

Honorable Denis Cohen  
Judge, Court of Common Pleas

20

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1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                               - - -

3                               P R O C E E D I N G S

4                               - - -

5                               COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: May I have  
6 everyone's attention, please. Thank you.

7                               I note that the hour has come and  
8 that a quorum of this Council is present.  
9 Council members will please come to order.  
10 Members will take their seats and visitors  
11 will retire to the seats outside the rails.

12                              I respectfully request that all cell  
13 phones please be turned off.

14                              I have convened this special session  
15 of Council to celebrate the life and mourn  
16 the death of our dear friend and colleague,  
17 Councilman David Cohen.

18                              Our heartfelt sympathies go to his  
19 wife Florence and his family, and we thank  
20 you for being with us today.

21                              To give our invocation this  
22 afternoon, the Chair welcomes the Reverend  
23 Isaac Miller of the Church of the Advocate.  
24 He is here today at the request of the Cohen  
25 family.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                    Would you please approach the  
3 podium.

4                    At this time, I would ask all  
5 members and guests to please rise.

6                    REV. MILLER: May we bow our heads.

7                    We thank you, dear God, for this day  
8 on which we recall your servant, our brother,  
9 David Cohen. We thank you for giving him to  
10 us, his family, and friends. We knew David  
11 as companion, friend, and colleague.

12                   From this chamber, we knew David as  
13 a tireless champion of the left and the  
14 least.

15                   We thank you, dear God, for his  
16 family sharing him with the whole of the city  
17 and beyond. We thank you for his family's  
18 support, especially that of Florence, his  
19 life companion.

20                   We trust, dear God, that this  
21 tireless champion, this passionate advocate  
22 of your compassion and justice, now rests  
23 with you.

24                   Having known David's example, we  
25 pray for his family ourselves and his

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           colleagues here, that we know your comfort  
3           and that we never rest until your vision for  
4           us, your vision for this city, and your  
5           vision for all human kind is fulfilled.

6                   All this we pray, all this we ask in  
7           your holy name.

8                   Amen.

9                   (Chorus of "amen.")

10                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair  
11           thanks Reverend Miller for his very touching  
12           invocation.

13                  How appropriate it is that we gather  
14           in these chambers today to memorialize David  
15           Cohen. It was in this very room that he  
16           spent over 30 years of his life, fighting for  
17           the little people, and oftentimes, I may say,  
18           fighting with us.

19                  (Laughter.)

20                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I am  
21           certain that all members of Council, past and  
22           present, who have served with David, can  
23           recall an issue about which David was  
24           passionate. That issue then became a bill,  
25           the merits of which David shared with us,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           privately asking for our vote, and publicly  
3           in a lengthy hearing or a lengthy speech  
4           during a Council session.

5                     Often his bills became law. And if  
6           they didn't, he never let those of us who did  
7           not vote for his bill ever, ever forget it.

8                     (Laughter.)

9                     COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I still  
10          remember certain bills that he would quote,  
11          and I'm sure that many of you also can recall  
12          that.

13                    We certainly will miss David.  
14          Although his voice has been silenced, his  
15          spirit will live on in this chamber for many,  
16          many years to come.

17                    So, our dear friend, we pray that  
18          God will grant you eternal peace.

19                    I now call upon Cantor Stephen  
20          Friedman from Temple Sinai for a tribute to  
21          Councilman Cohen.

22                    Cantor.

23                    Thank you.

24                    CANTOR FRIEDMAN: Councilman Cohen  
25          passed away on the eve of Roshashana, the

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           Jewish new year, a time when we believe our  
3           very lives hang in the balance.

4                     The classic prayer, baroshashana,  
5           frames our uncertainty through vivid imagery.  
6           Who shall live and who shall die, who in the  
7           fullness of years and who before, who by  
8           fire, who by water, who by hunger, who by  
9           thirst, who shall be poor, who shall be rich,  
10          who shall be brought low, and who uplifted.

11                    David Cohen was blessed with  
12          fullness of years, and through his life  
13          enriched and uplifted the citizens of  
14          Philadelphia.

15                    (Singing in Yiddish.)

16                    CANTOR FRIEDMAN: The Book of Psalms  
17          contain basic truths and insights which have  
18          served to comfort people of faith in times of  
19          trouble and distress, as well as to inspire  
20          them in moments of joy and celebration.

21                    In Psalm 112, the Psalmist captures  
22          the essence of what a good life is all about.

23                    (Singing in Yiddish.)

24                    CANTOR FRIEDMAN: He will be  
25          remembered with fondness and with honor, his

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           goodness rewarded by God.

3                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,

4           Cantor Freedman. That was truly lovely.

5                   At this time, the Chair recognizes

6           Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, for a motion

7           on a resolution, to present it, regarding

8           Councilman Cohen.

9                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,

10          Madam President.

11                   I move that the rules of Council be

12          suspended, in order to permit the immediate

13          consideration of this resolution at the time

14          of introduction.

15                   COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Second.

16                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: It has

17          been moved and properly seconded that the

18          rules of Council be suspended so as to permit

19          immediate consideration of this resolution at

20          the time of its introduction.

21                   All in favor will please indicate by

22          saying aye.

23                   (Chorus of "ayes.")

24                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Those

25          opposed?

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   (No response.)

3           COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The ayes  
4 have it, and the motion carries.

5                   For those of you who are standing,  
6 this is going to be rather lengthy. There  
7 are ample seats up in the balcony. We would  
8 certainly be more than happy to have one of  
9 the sergeant-at-arms escort you up to the  
10 fifth floor, so that you would be certainly a  
11 lot more comfortable sitting up in the  
12 balcony.

13                   The Chair again recognizes  
14 Councilwoman Blackwell.

15           COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,  
16 Madam President.

17                   Today I have one resolution.

18           COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

19                   The Chief Clerk will please read the  
20 resolution in its entirety.

21           CHIEF CLERK: A resolution mourning  
22 the death and honoring the memory of David  
23 Cohen.

24                   Whereas, David Cohen was 90 years  
25 old, when on October 3, 2005, God in his

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           wisdom took him from his our midst.

3                   This city, commonwealth and country  
4           have lost a true friend and wonderful  
5           gentleman.

6                   And whereas, Mr. Cohen hails from a  
7           family that immigrated to Philadelphia from  
8           the Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th  
9           century.

10                  David Cohen was bright, but a  
11           terrible paperhanger. So his six older  
12           siblings decided to send him to the  
13           University of Pennsylvania at age 16, rather  
14           than have him working in their wallpaper  
15           business.

16                  In 1937, David Cohen graduated first  
17           in his class from the University of  
18           Pennsylvania School of Law at age 23.

19                  He moved to Washington, D.C., to  
20           work as a lawyer in President Franklin D.  
21           Roosevelt's New Deal rural electrification  
22           administration.

23                  Mr. Cohen's desire to help the  
24           little people and his liberal views were  
25           formed in this first job. He wanted to make

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           government more relevant to all.

3                   And whereas, in 1943 David Cohen was  
4           drafted in the United States Army. He  
5           courageously served in New Guinea during  
6           World War II.

7                   Upon his return, he married Florence  
8           Herzog in 1946 and they lived in New York  
9           City.

10                   In 1952, the Cohen's returned to the  
11           Ogontz section of Philadelphia to raise their  
12           growing family.

13                   By their example, they taught their  
14           four children the values of integrity, hard  
15           work, equality for all, and a belief in  
16           public service.

17                   And whereas, Mr. Cohen entered  
18           Democratic politics in the city as a  
19           committeeman in the fourth ward in 1952.

20                   He worked on the presidential  
21           campaign of Adlai Stevenson.

22                   In 1965 he took up the cause of  
23           racial bias in voter registration in  
24           Mississippi and marched with Martin Luther  
25           King, Jr., from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                     In that same year Mr. Cohen was  
3       elected ward leader in the 17th ward; and in  
4       1967, he was elected Councilman from the  
5       Eighth District, serving the northwest  
6       section of Philadelphia.

7                     Mr. Cohen resigned his Council seat  
8       for an unsuccessful bid for mayor in 1971,  
9       but he was elected back into a city Council  
10      at-large seat in 1979, a position which he  
11      held until his death.

12                    And whereas, Councilman David  
13      Cohen's principles, always strong, served him  
14      well in life and in City Council.

15                    Together with his wife Florence,  
16      they championed the causes of senior  
17      citizens, environmentalists and the poor.

18                    There was no issue too burdensome  
19      for Councilman Cohen, if it meant serving his  
20      constituents.

21                    And whereas, a good and true legend  
22      has left us, we, his colleagues, fondly  
23      recall the hours we spent with him and the  
24      words of wisdom he imparted.

25                    We will miss him and we will forever

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           remember him in our hearts and minds, and in  
3           the lasting history of our city.

4                     Now, therefore, resolved by the  
5           Council of the City of Philadelphia, that we  
6           hereby mourn the death and celebrate the life  
7           of the Honorable David Cohen.

8                     To his wife, Florence; his children:  
9           Mark, Denis, Sherrie and Judy; and his  
10          grandchildren, we extend our most profound  
11          condolences.

12                    Resolved, an engrossed copy of this  
13          resolution be presented to Florence Cohen, as  
14          evidence of the sincere respect of this  
15          legislative body.

16                    This is a true and correct copy of  
17          the original resolution adopted by Council of  
18          the City of Philadelphia on the 17th day of  
19          October 2005, introduced and signed by all  
20          members of City Council.

21                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

22                    At this time the Chair recognizes  
23          Councilwoman Blackwell for a motion on the  
24          resolution.

25                    COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           Madam President.

3                   I move that this resolution be  
4           adopted by a standing vote of all Council  
5           members.

6                   COUNCILMAN KENNEY:   Second.

7                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:   Thank you.

8                   All those voting in favor of the  
9           resolution will do so by a standing vote.

10                   (All members of City Council stood.)

11                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:   This  
12           resolution has been unanimously adopted.

13                   At this time I call Congressman  
14           Robert Brady to the podium, to say a few  
15           words about Councilman Cohen.

16                   CONGRESSMAN BRADY:   Thank you,  
17           Council President.   And good afternoon to all  
18           the elected officials, all the administration  
19           people, all the friends of David and his  
20           family.   It's my honor, my pleasure to be  
21           here.

22                   Brings back a lot of memories, being  
23           here.   I haven't been here for 25 years.   I  
24           don't think I stepped foot in this room,  
25           after working here for many decades.   Good

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           memories; bad memories. Well, they're all  
3           good memories; no bad memories. Educational  
4           memories.  
5                    Throwing out Santa Claus. Married  
6           with two children. Have to be on T.V.  
7           throwing out Santa Claus. Thank you, Council  
8           lady Krajewski.  
9                    (Laughter.)  
10                   CONGRESSMAN BRADY: And as I was in  
11           here walking around, saying hello to a couple  
12           friends, Councilman DiCicco said, I don't  
13           know why we're here. Dave is going to walk  
14           in here next Thursday. Anybody out there  
15           doubt that? I don't doubt it.  
16                   But again, it's my pleasure to be  
17           here. I look over, and I see our Mayor. I  
18           had the distinct pleasure of bodily throwing  
19           him out of here.  
20                   (Laughter.)  
21                   CONGRESSMAN BRADY: You came a long  
22           way, sir.  
23                   (Laughter.)  
24                   CONGRESSMAN BRADY: I taught you  
25           well.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   (Laughter.)

3           CONGRESSMAN BRADY: But I promise I  
4 will be brief. And the next line our Mayor  
5 will say when he speaks.

6                   It's just my pleasure to be here.  
7 You know, David Cohen was an icon. He was a  
8 fighter for the people who couldn't fight for  
9 themselves. Everybody knew that. You're  
10 going to hear a whole lot of people going to  
11 talk about that.

12                  But I've got to talk about a  
13 personal relationship I had with David Cohen  
14 for thirty years. Some twenty-six, -seven  
15 years ago, I had a -- a sergeant-at-arms had  
16 to walk over there where Wilson Good is  
17 sitting right now and Blondell  
18 Reynolds-Brown, and separate David Cohen and  
19 Lou Johanson from a fistfight. Do you  
20 remember that, Council President?

21           COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, I  
22 remember that.

23           CONGRESSMAN BRADY: Had to separate  
24 the two of them. I said, boy, what a feisty,  
25 elderly gentleman this is.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   (Laughter.)

3           CONGRESSMAN BRADY: And that was 20,  
4           30 years ago. And he never stopped, you  
5           know. And God bless him.

6                   But as a politician -- And that's  
7           what I am. You know, you can have a lot of  
8           titles, but you're always a politician.

9                   David Cohen was a mentor of mine and  
10          somebody who I went from time to time, maybe  
11          too many times, for advice.

12                  And as his staff will tell you, I  
13          always went to him. I never made him come to  
14          me because of the respect that I had for him.

15                  When I had aspirations to try to sit  
16          in one of these seats as a Council person, I  
17          went to him. And he told me as a ward  
18          leader, which he was in the 17th ward, that  
19          he would support me.

20                  And supporting me meant that I may  
21          beat him. Naturally, I didn't, but it still  
22          meant that. And he stood by me and he  
23          supported me in that effort.

24                  When I went for Chairman, he was one  
25          of my staunch supporters that stood by me and

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           supported me all through and stayed with me  
3           and helped me along those lines.

4                   When I aspired to be a Congressman,  
5           I sat and talked to him. I didn't know  
6           whether I wanted to do this. And he pushed  
7           me, and pushed me to do that.

8                   And he was knowledgeable. He told  
9           me what he learned. And, you know, when I  
10          met with Councilman Cohen, I never spoke. I  
11          always listened because I didn't have to let  
12          him know what I knew. I had to find out what  
13          he knew. And I took his advice.

14                   You know, from time to time we have  
15          elections. And David was a ward leader. And  
16          David always... always, always -- and I need  
17          to say this so a lot of people out here can  
18          hear me... always supported the endorsed  
19          Democratic ticket.

20                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's  
21          true.

22                   CONGRESSMAN BRADY: Never, never did  
23          he ever, ever sway from supporting the  
24          endorsed Democratic ticket.

25                   Now, to get him to agree on the

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           endorsed Democratic ticket was a completely  
3           different story, but he always supported the  
4           Democratic ticket which I really, really  
5           truly, as the party chairman, do appreciate.

6                     You know, we take ourselves too  
7           seriously. Had a conversation with Council  
8           lady Tasco on the way up, and lost a good  
9           friend. We're losing too many good friends.  
10          And I lost too many good mentors, of the  
11          Buddy Cianfrani of the world, the Norman  
12          Loudenschlagers, God knows the Lou  
13          Blackwells, the Roxanne Jones, the Dave  
14          Richardson's and now the David Cohens.

15                    Can you imagine what the table's  
16          like up there? They're all sitting around  
17          that table. They're deciding our fate down  
18          here, without question.

19                    But we lose too many people, and we  
20          probably take ourselves a little bit too  
21          seriously. It's just a chance to reflect on  
22          people and people that have made an impact in  
23          the city.

24                    And no one, no one has made an  
25          impact like David Cohen has. No one has been

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           a fighter for the people who couldn't fight  
3           for themselves and fight for every one of us  
4           in here.

5                     And you always knew where he stood.  
6           There's not going to be another David Cohen  
7           that's ever going to be around in this town  
8           again that I can think of. At least it won't  
9           happen in my lifetime.

10                    To his family, to his lovely wife  
11           Florence, who was by his side every step of  
12           the way, and he was by your side every step  
13           of the way, you knew how much he adored you  
14           and how much you adored him. And when you  
15           saw you, you saw him. When you saw him, you  
16           saw you. And as for many, many years, that's  
17           to your credit.

18                    To his daughters who he sheltered,  
19           rightfully so, and wanted to keep you away  
20           from this arena of politics, you know... And  
21           we had a lot of discussions about that. He  
22           talked to me about my daughter, to do the  
23           same in return, which I did do.

24                    To Mark, he loved and he was so  
25           proud of your work ethic, everything that you

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           did up in the state house, the hours you put  
3           in. I think you probably without question  
4           put more hours than any state representative  
5           in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He was  
6           so proud of you.

7                     Denis, I say over and over again, he  
8           called me. He said, I have a young son that  
9           you never knew, you never met, probably don't  
10          know about him. He's not like me. He's not  
11          like the Cohens. He's different. He's a  
12          real nice guy. He's not egotistical.

13                    (Laughter.)

14                    CONGRESSMAN BRADY: He said, he  
15          would make a great judge. And he fought for  
16          that, and he saw that happen. And he saw  
17          Mark happen. And he was blessed to do that.  
18          And he told me time and time again that he  
19          was blessed to do that.

20                    So, I mean... I mean, I lost a good  
21          friend. And these are secret weapons that a  
22          lot of you don't know about my relationships  
23          with some of these people that I mentioned,  
24          and hopefully won't have to mention again  
25          because that means that you won't be here.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           And I want you all to stay around a long  
3           time.

4                   But I lost a good friend in David  
5           Cohen. I lost a good mentor. I'm going to  
6           miss him a whole lot, more than probably  
7           anybody could ever know, because he always  
8           told me what I had to do, how I had to do it,  
9           and the way I had to do it, and most  
10          important -- and most important -- he always  
11          supported what I've done and always supported  
12          what the Democratic party did, sometimes  
13          whether it was right or whether it was wrong  
14          or whether it was easy or whether it was  
15          hard.

16                   So, I got a piece of my heart taken  
17          away, and I don't think it can ever get  
18          replaced.

19                   So again, thank you all to the  
20          family. God bless you. God bless you for  
21          doing what you're doing.

22                   And I am not too far away. I've had  
23          many conversations with all of yous. I want  
24          to continue to have more.

25                   Thank you all and God bless you.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   (Applause.)

3                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,  
4           Congressman.

5                   Our next speaker is Mayor John F.  
6           Street.

7                   MAYOR STREET: Thank you, Madam  
8           President, members of City Council, and  
9           Congressman, other elected officials, and  
10          distinguish ladies and gentlemen that are  
11          gathered here today. And of course, to the  
12          family of the late, great Councilman David  
13          Cohen.

14                   It is indeed a special privilege to  
15          be here today. And I promise I'll be brief,  
16          no matter how long it takes.

17                   (Laughter.)

18                   MAYOR STREET: It's my special line.  
19          Congressman, thank you so very much.

20                   I apologize for being late, but I  
21          was out in Joan Krajewski territory, out in  
22          the Northeast. We had a wonderful meeting  
23          with the Northeast Chamber of Commerce.

24                   And I was coming back, and I was  
25          reflecting a little bit on the service. And

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           I talked to Florence last week, and I was at  
3           the memorial service, and I actually did a  
4           KYW message on Councilman Cohen, and talked  
5           about he was a man of great intellect, he was  
6           a man of substance.

7                     And I thought to myself, I'd like to  
8           focus on two things. One, we're hear today  
9           because we want to honor a person who lived a  
10          life of service.

11                    And for Councilman Cohen and his  
12          family, he did a wonderful, wonderful job.  
13          But I think we'd like to think that there are  
14          young people out there. There are people who  
15          live in every neighborhood. There are  
16          thousands of children in our public school  
17          system who really could take a great message  
18          from the life of Councilman Cohen.

19                    And I'd like to say to the teachers  
20          and the administrators because I'd like for  
21          our teachers in our public school system and  
22          some of our community people, let's not  
23          forget Councilman Cohen, and to talk a little  
24          bit about him in the classes and to talk a  
25          little bit about him when they're standing

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           out talking to young people.

3                   And I'm fond of saying, the greatest  
4           tragedy in life is not death, but a life that  
5           fails to fulfill its and potential.

6                   Councilman Cohen, as much as anybody  
7           that I have ever seen, lived a life that was  
8           full of purpose and reached a high degree of  
9           its potential, because Councilman Cohen,  
10          unlike many other people, he was driven by  
11          his ideals. He was driven -- What's that  
12          noise? Does anybody hear that noise? Am I  
13          the only one hearing that noise? Is  
14          anything, President, we can do about that?  
15          What is that noise?

16                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: I don't  
17          know.

18                   VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: Metal  
19          detector.

20                   MAYOR STREET: Pardon me?

21                   VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: Metal  
22          detector.

23                   MAYOR STREET: It's a metal  
24          detector? Is that what it is?

25                   VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: Yeah.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   MAYOR STREET: Anybody else hear  
3           that noise? Am I the only one?

4                   Is it, like, like getting on your  
5           nerves, too? I'm saying, what's that noise  
6           there, right?

7                   (Laughter.)

8                   MAYOR STREET: Well, I guess we'll  
9           just have -- That's probably now part of the  
10          new crowd noise that we have to deal with. I  
11          lost a moment there.

12                  Councilman Cohen really lived a life  
13          that was full of purpose and potential. The  
14          thing that I would say to our young people  
15          is, find out, submit, stand for something,  
16          mean something.

17                  If you want to be Michaelangelo and  
18          do what Michaelangelo did or Martin Luther  
19          King and do what he did, find something, be  
20          about something.

21                  There are too many people who are on  
22          the corners, they're in bars, they're in  
23          places where they have hang out, and they  
24          don't stand for anything. There's nothing.  
25          There's no driving force in their lives.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   Councilman Cohen the driving force  
3       in his life. He stood for something. He  
4       meant something, and he was unwilling to  
5       compromise it unless he thought the  
6       compromise was fair.

7                   And he drove a hard bargain. You  
8       liked to deal with Councilman Cohen. He  
9       drove a hard bargain. And it was never for  
10      him. It was never for him. I never ever,  
11      except for salaries of his staff...

12                   (Laughter.)

13                   MAYOR STREET: Except for salaries  
14      for his staff, right, Council President?

15                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: I agree.

16                   MAYOR STREET: Except for salaries  
17      for his staff. Let me tell you something:  
18      Cohen's got the best paid staff in the world.

19                   (Laughter.)

20                   MAYOR STREET: He's got the best  
21      paid staff in his world. And he was  
22      relentless. After a while you just said,  
23      give him the money.

24                   (Laughter.)

25                   MAYOR STREET: Get out of here,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           David. They can have the money.

3                   (Laughter.)

4                   MAYOR STREET: But other than that,  
5           he never asked for anything for himself.

6           Cohen didn't want anything for himself. As  
7           long as he could have Florence right there  
8           with him, he was not worried about anything  
9           else.

10                   He never ever, ever -- I sat on this  
11           floor with him for 19 years. And he worried  
12           about utilities. If Councilman Cohen were  
13           alive today, he would be making a speech  
14           about the ripoff that is happening in this  
15           country as a result of the utility problem.

16                   (Sustained applause.)

17                   MAYOR STREET: He worried. He  
18           worried about the minimum wage, he worried  
19           about utilities, he worried about the senior  
20           citizen discount. Actually, I don't think  
21           Councilman Cohen thought anybody should pay,  
22           really.

23                   (Laughter.)

24                   MAYOR STREET: Well, actually not.  
25           That's a little bit unfair. But Councilman

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           Cohen believed that people shouldn't have to  
3           make ugly choices between heating and eating.  
4           He believed that in the greatest country of  
5           all the world and this industrialized society  
6           that we have, that people shouldn't have to  
7           worry about their utilities.

8                     And he lived a meaningful life and  
9           everything was important to him. Everything  
10          was important. There was no -- There were no  
11          unimportant issues. There were no  
12          unimportant people. There were no  
13          unimportant problems that folks had in the  
14          community that Cohen wasn't interested in  
15          resolving.

16                    And he would come here, and he would  
17          tirelessly and relentlessly apply himself to  
18          that problem, no matter what it was. And he  
19          didn't care who was against him. He didn't  
20          care who was for it.

21                    Cohen was capable of being... He  
22          was capable of initiating a one-person  
23          boycott.

24                    (Laughter.)

25                    MAYOR STREET: I imagine he's

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           probably boycotting something right now. I'm  
3           not buying any more gas for \$3 a gallon.  
4           Because Cohen had his standards. He had  
5           lines. He had things that he would do and  
6           things that he wouldn't do.

7                   Too many people don't have any  
8           standards. Cohen had standards. Cohen...  
9           Congressman Blackwell used to say to me that  
10          he really liked Councilman Longstreth.

11                   I always liked Councilman  
12          Longstreth, too. I particularly liked him  
13          because he always liked me. We always like  
14          people who like us.

15                   But Congressman Blackwell used to  
16          say that he liked Thatcher Longstreth because  
17          Thatcher Longstreth understood his mission.  
18          He was from the business community. He  
19          wasn't confused about that.

20                   And he used to always say that David  
21          Cohen represented little people, poor people,  
22          and he wasn't confused about that.

23                   And so, there are huge lessons in  
24          the life of Councilman Cohen. And I hope  
25          that among all the members of his family --

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           Florence, of course, is the leader -- that  
3           someone will take and will create, write this  
4           story up, and somebody will put it in a  
5           position, because the Councilman David Cohen  
6           story ought to be a part of the archives of  
7           this city.

8                   I've actually started thinking a  
9           little bit about archives, and went on a web  
10          site. Do you know that we have -- There's a  
11          web site that contains all the archives of  
12          various administrations.

13                   We as a city don't do a very good  
14          job of cataloging our history. But somebody  
15          ought to catalog Councilman Cohen's history.  
16          They ought to be part of the archives.

17                   I recommend to Council President and  
18          to the members of City Council that Council  
19          archives be created, and that we go back and  
20          try to -- try to lay out the work of great  
21          members of City Council.

22                   You know, there's a story that's  
23          told, and I sometimes tell it when I'm giving  
24          speeches. This Mayor was in his office one  
25          day, and he heard somebody on the other side

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           of the door banging on the door, you know,  
3           saying, and I want to talk to the Mayor, and  
4           I don't want to talk to anybody lower than  
5           the Mayor.

6                     And he opened the door and said,  
7           Miss, there is no one lower than the Mayor.

8                     (Laughter.)

9                     MAYOR STREET: Well, with all due  
10          respect to that story, in the City of  
11          Philadelphia, it's a Council person. You  
12          know that. It's the Council person.

13                    In the City of Philadelphia people  
14          can get to, you know, Clarke, Tasco, Verna  
15          and Nutter and Krajewski. They can get to  
16          the Blackwells of the world.

17                    They don't feel like they can always  
18          get to the Mayor because we're big.

19                    And being a member of the City  
20          Council is a noble responsibility. It is a  
21          great work that Council has to do. And  
22          Councilman Cohen did it with an ease and with  
23          a facility and with a degree of dedication  
24          and determination that we'd like to see  
25          replicated in all of our members.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   I'd like to, before I close, mention  
3       four quick things. Now, you know I've told  
4       you the story that Cohen said that I had  
5       reduced the City Council to less than a  
6       rubber stamp. You remember that. I actually  
7       put it in my thing. Cohen was really very  
8       unhappy this day.

9                   And I was up there where the Council  
10      President is. And he says, and you have  
11      reduced this Council to less than a rubber  
12      stamp. He was, like, way up here.

13                  But there's some other things  
14      about... things that Councilman Cohen I'd  
15      like to point out.

16                  Now, Florence I don't want anybody  
17      to be offended. Where did Dave get those  
18      shoes?

19                  (Laughter.)

20                  MAYOR STREET: I want to know about  
21      the shoes. Have you all noticed the shoes  
22      Councilman Cohen used to wear? Councilman  
23      Cohen wore some shoes that were unlike any  
24      shoes that I had ever seen before.

25                  And I point that out -- Charley, I

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           see you laughing right there. Councilman  
3           Cohen ordered those shoes, didn't he?

4                   And no one -- You could not buy  
5           those shoes in any kind of a store. I would  
6           like to know where I could possibly get those  
7           shoes.

8                   (Laughter.)

9                   MAYOR STREET: I'd like to be able  
10          to get a pair of those shoes because they  
11          tell me -- I was thinking maybe if I could  
12          walk in those shoes or some like it, then  
13          maybe I might be able to get to 90, and be in  
14          as great a shape as Councilman Cohen.

15                   But I one time went up to his  
16          office, and I asked him -- He actually gave  
17          me this information once. Florence, you  
18          remember. And I lost it. I actually looked  
19          at the shoes and decided, I could never wear  
20          those shoes. I was just too young to wear  
21          those shoes.

22                   (Laughter.)

23                   MAYOR STRETT: But I'm thinking  
24          about maybe it might be time for me to get a  
25          pair of those shoes, because they actually

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           look like the most comfortable shoes in the  
3           world. They had to be comfortable because  
4           they didn't look like much. Those shoes had  
5           to be, like, very, very comfortable.

6                     But they also -- they also said a  
7           lot about Councilman Cohen, because I think  
8           in the 20, 30 years that he was on City  
9           Council he probably only ever had two pair.

10                    (Laughter.)

11                   MAYOR STREET: How many, Florence,  
12           did he have?

13                   MRS. COHEN: Maybe two.

14                    (Laughter.)

15                   MAYOR STREET: Maybe two.

16                    I think he had one pair of those  
17           shoes for about 15 years. And I finally  
18           asked him, I said, David, do these shoes ever  
19           wear out?

20                    And he just kind of laughed and said  
21           something about, well, he didn't care very  
22           much about the shoes. Cohen was so busy  
23           doing his job that he didn't worry much about  
24           those other things.

25                    Councilman Cohen was a fighter.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           Now, all you all remember... Do you remember  
3           the fight that we had on the floor of City  
4           Council when Rafferty and I were out here?  
5           And we were... Anybody remember that?  
6                       (Hands raised in the audience.)  
7           MAYOR STREET: You probably forgot  
8           all about that, right?  
9                       Well, but what you all don't know  
10          is, that on that same day another fight took  
11          place. Anybody remember that? Another fight  
12          took place.  
13                      Because I used to sit, I think,  
14          where Councilman DiCicco was sitting.  
15          Anybody remember who sat next to me? Anybody  
16          remember who sat next to me right there?  
17                      VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible.)  
18                      MAYOR STREET: Who?  
19                      VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible.)  
20                      MAYOR STREET: No.  
21                      COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think  
22          you sat where Jim Kenney sits.  
23                      MAYOR STREET: No, no, no, no, no.  
24          I didn't sit there.  
25                      COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           that's the way it was.

3                   MAYOR STREET: No. No. That's --

4           When I first came here, I was a back bencher.

5           I was not on the front row.

6                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Well, are

7           you talking about when you first came or the

8           day of the fight?

9                   MAYOR STREET: No. I'm talking

10          about -- I'm talking about when I first came.

11                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Oh.

12                  MAYOR STREET: I sat... I sat...

13          Was it Blondell?

14                  Well, who sat... And that was

15          Blackwell that sat next to me.

16                  COUNCILWOMAN Blackwell: Right here.

17                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Blackwell

18          sat where Jannie sits.

19                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Well, who

20          sat where Councilman Ramos is sitting?

21                  VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible.)

22                  MAYOR STREET: Lou Johanson sat

23          there.

24                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: No, he

25          didn't.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   MAYOR STREET: Yeah. I remember.

3                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Sat

4           where... No.

5                   MAYOR STREET: Well, wait a minute.

6           Wait a minute.

7                   I'm now trying to figure out where I

8           was sitting on the fight that we had during

9           Abscam.

10                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You sat,

11           if my memory serves me -- And I think there

12           are other people around here who can attest

13           to it. You sat where Councilman Kenney sits.

14                  Lou Blackwell was sitting where

15           Jannie Blackwell sits, and Dave Cohen was in

16           the seat that he has occupied.

17                  MAYOR STREET: Cohen was sitting --

18           Lou Johanson and Cohen were sitting right

19           back there where --

20                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Lou

21           Johanson, I believe, sat where either

22           Blondell or Wilson Goode is sitting.

23                  MAYOR STREET: That's right. And

24           Cohen sat right next to him. You know how I

25           know Cohen sat right next to him? Because

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           Lou Johanson got up and grabbed Councilman  
3           Cohen -- Anybody remember that -- grabbed  
4           Councilman Cohen.

5                   And weren't the two of them sitting  
6           on that back row? They were sitting right on  
7           the back row.

8                   VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible.)

9                   MAYOR STREET: And Cohen sat right  
10          next to him. And Cohen sat right next to  
11          him.

12                  VOICE IN THE AUDIENCE: (Inaudible.)

13                  (Laughter and applause.)

14                  MAYOR STREET: My point is that  
15          Councilman Cohen and Lou Johanson were back  
16          there on the floor fighting. That's my  
17          point. My point is that they were back there  
18          on the floor fighting, but they never got any  
19          attention for their fight. They never got  
20          any attention because all the attention was  
21          placed on this little corner over here.

22                  And I think that was a little  
23          unfair. But Councilman Cohen was handling  
24          himself in that little fight.

25                  And Lou Johanson reached up and

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           grabbed him. And Cohen's chair went back.  
3           And I remember seeing the legs went back.  
4           And the two of them fell off of the chair.  
5           And all I remember is that Cohen landed on  
6           top.

7                       (Laughter.)

8           MAYOR STREET: Councilman Cohen  
9           landed on top.

10               But Councilman Cohen was a wonderful  
11           man. He had a great sense of humor. We will  
12           never forget all of his work on City Council,  
13           his political work. We won't forget the work  
14           that did he in neighborhoods, and the work  
15           that he did on behalf of people who were  
16           largely under represented and whose issues in  
17           many cases would never ever have come to the  
18           floor of this Council in a way as represented  
19           by Councilman David Cohen.

20               And so, to the members of the  
21           family, we appreciate very much the support  
22           that you gave him, the support that you gave  
23           the City of Philadelphia. It is our hope  
24           that his memory and your life will continue  
25           to grow and there will be warm memories.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   But I can tell you as a part of the  
3       political establishment of this city, we will  
4       never forget him and we will do everything we  
5       can to keep his memory alive.

6                   And at this time I'd like for  
7       Florence to come forward. We have a little  
8       token of our appreciation, which will be  
9       brought to this podium by none other than  
10      Chief of Staff Joyce Wilkerson who spent  
11      many, many years working here in the City  
12      Council of Philadelphia.

13                   (Applause.)

14                   MAYOR STREET: It's a bowl.

15                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Patriots'  
16      bowl.

17                   MAYOR STREET: Can we get over here  
18      some place where we can get some photographs,  
19      Florence.

20                   (Applause.)

21                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,  
22      Mr. Mayor.

23                   We will now hear from Councilwoman  
24      Jannie Blackwell.

25                   COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           Madam President.

3                   As has been said, Councilman David  
4           Cohen will never be forgotten and can never  
5           be replaced.

6                   One of my most vivid memories is his  
7           fighting for a position as tenaciously, as  
8           everyone has said, for legislation.

9                   But in spite of the fact of giving  
10          me his opinion and telling me how he felt  
11          about an issue, he always said, Jannie, do  
12          what you think is right.

13                  And having been around a few years  
14          now on my own, I always, whenever I meet new  
15          elected officials, tell them, listen to the  
16          people who elected you and always do what you  
17          think is right.

18                  So, we'll always remember that, and  
19          that will always be part of my life and my  
20          memories of David Cohen.

21                  Finally, he was very active all over  
22          the city and in my district as well. He was  
23          an honorary member of the West Philadelphia  
24          Cultural Alliance and the Paul Robson  
25          National Campaign to, quote, Restore House

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           and Preserve a Legacy.

3                   And certainly we thank him for his  
4           life. We thank him for his commitment. And  
5           we say to this family, God bless you. We're  
6           very sorry. Thank you.

7                   (Applause.)

8                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you.

9                   Our next speaker is Councilwoman  
10          Marian Tasco.

11                   COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you,  
12          Madam President.

13                   Madam President, colleagues, to the  
14          Cohen family, elected officials, appointed  
15          officials, friends who gather this afternoon,  
16          as we reflect on the life and times of our  
17          friend, David Cohen, I will miss his spirited  
18          speeches and debates on behalf of the people  
19          and the issues affecting our city.

20                   In fact, it will be his voice that I  
21          will think of as we close each session. As  
22          it is our protocol, Madam President will ask,  
23          are there any speeches on behalf of the  
24          majority?

25                   And I will be waiting for David's

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           response. Madam President, I would like to  
3           be heard.

4                     In this regard, I am reflecting on  
5           how David Cohen would like to be heard  
6           concerning Daily News columnist Jill Porter's  
7           recent articles about term limits for Council  
8           members.

9                     In her column, Miss Porter discussed  
10          the frailties of former Councilman Thatcher  
11          Longstreth and our recently deceased David.  
12          She argued that City Council needs term  
13          limits because these two men stayed in City  
14          Council too long.

15                    As support for her argument, she  
16          stated that David's ideals never faltered but  
17          he did, and that his speeches rambled, his  
18          points meandered puzzlingly.

19                    Well, if David could be heard, he  
20          would point out that his speeches were no  
21          different than those of his younger  
22          colleagues who sometimes --

23                    (Laughter.)

24                    COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: -- who  
25          sometimes became emotionally attached to an

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           issue which they are advocating.

3                   As Miss Porter and others focused on  
4           his age, they seemed to forget that David's  
5           ideals, fighting for the little people, never  
6           faltered. And his passion for these ideals  
7           were the essence of his speeches, debates and  
8           calling to public service.

9                   While some of us did roll our eyes  
10          will David spoke and persisted in an argument  
11          of speech, this response was not based on  
12          David's age. It is no different than the  
13          responses we make when a Council member  
14          offers a position that we disagree with.

15                  If David could be heard, he would  
16          say that he persisted in his arguments and  
17          speeches because he had the scars of working  
18          hard and helping the thousands of citizens of  
19          Philadelphia who sought his assistance with  
20          one problem or another.

21                  Whether it was the fight for item  
22          pricing, lower gas rates, the senior  
23          citizens' discount, the fight against the  
24          proposed trash to steam plant, the right of  
25          workers for a fair labor contract or an

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           employee who had been unfairly terminated,  
3           these citizens did not see David's frailties  
4           but a powerful and tireless advocate they  
5           believed in and trusted to never give up the  
6           fight.

7                     If David could be heard, David would  
8           never be a proponent for term limits. His  
9           response would mirror that of Councilman  
10          Kenney's. Term limits are called elections.

11                    David trusted the voters to know who  
12          had served them and those who did not, in  
13          spite of what the media and others thought  
14          should happen.

15                    I believe that if David had lived to  
16          run for reelection, the citizens, in spite of  
17          his frailties would have reelected him  
18          because of the outstanding public service  
19          that he and his office provided to  
20          constituents, constituents who are more aware  
21          of what is going on in the political arena  
22          than the media and others might believe.

23                    All one has to do is talk with the  
24          people, as David often did. He went  
25          everywhere and spoke to everyone, and he

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           listened.

3                   So, each Thursday I will reflect and  
4           wish that I could hear, Madam President, I  
5           would like to be heard, from David Cohen one  
6           more time as he makes a passionate argument  
7           or speech.

8                   Some may call his statements as  
9           rambling or meandering points. However, his  
10          colleagues, friends and most importantly his  
11          constituents knew he was advocating on their  
12          behalf because he had their interest at heart  
13          and in the end would win for them.

14                  This City, the state, this country,  
15          this world has lost a citizen of the highest  
16          order.

17                  Thank you, Madam President.

18                  (Applause.)

19                  COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you,  
20          Madam President.

21                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

22                  Our next speaker is Councilman Brian  
23          O'Neill.

24                  COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you,  
25          Madam President.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're  
3 welcome.

4                   COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: It will be  
5 shorter if I'm up here. And I can look at  
6 David sitting there, because I still have a  
7 hard time thinking of this body without him  
8 in that chair.

9                   But he was a special man. Probably  
10 over 26 years no one disagreed with him more  
11 or had him disagree with them more than  
12 myself.

13                   But it was always a good fight. He  
14 probably won more than I did in the early  
15 days. I probably won more than he did in the  
16 later days.

17                   But as David would say, when John  
18 Dean coined the term, the Democratic wing of  
19 the Democratic party, that was our friend  
20 David.

21                   He never flinched from his ideals.  
22 He wasn't so much for the left as for the  
23 left out. And I can say that many times I  
24 wished I were on his side, because he was a  
25 true champion of his causes.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   People said at his funeral service  
3           that David didn't need a poll. David didn't  
4           look at a poll.

5                   Well, David didn't need a poll.  
6           David was so fixed on the constituency that  
7           he represented, so sure of what the issue  
8           was -- And as I think of David -- And I can  
9           never call him Dave. I don't think too many  
10          other people could either around here.

11                  I wonder if it was because David  
12          Cohen saw everything in terms of Goliath.  
13          And he could instinctively pick the side  
14          David would be on with his slingshot.

15                  And he'd come in here every week  
16          with a slingshot. It didn't matter how big  
17          the opposition was, how big a defeat he was  
18          going to take if he lost. Never mattered to  
19          him.

20                  And he could speak as well and  
21          defend a position and argue a position as  
22          well as anyone I have ever seen anywhere.

23                  The Mayor mentioned archives. I  
24          wish we could archive David's speeches and  
25          send them to Washington to the Democratic

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           wing of the Democratic party, because people  
3           say to me, did... Are you going to give a  
4           speech and kind of give it the Republican  
5           rebuttal?

6                     Well, there really isn't a  
7           Republican rebuttal when it comes to David  
8           Cohen. You see, David was as upset with some  
9           or all of his colleagues as much as he was  
10          upset with the Republicans on Council,  
11          because he was upset with people that  
12          disagreed with him, because in his heart his  
13          cause was the right one.

14                    And if you disagreed with him. It  
15          wasn't a party affiliation. He might have  
16          said that, talking about Republicans, but he  
17          came right back and said he was even more  
18          ashamed of people of his own party.

19                    But it was a joy to be with him.  
20          And when you get to know his family, see his  
21          family, you know that that feisty,  
22          argumentative, tear them apart little guy,  
23          was totally different with his family.

24                    And you also know that because...  
25          And I'm sure I speak for all of us... While

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           we could argue with him in a meeting in the  
3           Council President's office or in the caucus  
4           room or out here on the floor, David was a  
5           perfect gentleman everywhere else. You  
6           wouldn't think you ever had an argument with  
7           him.

8                     He was just a perfect gentleman. He  
9           was funny. He was easy to talk to. And he  
10          left the legislative stuff here. And he was  
11          a person out there that anyone would enjoy  
12          being with.

13                    So, I feel very lucky to have served  
14          with him for 26 years and learned an awful  
15          lot from him.

16                    And it's one thing to disagree with  
17          somebody; but, boy, I wish I was on his side  
18          an awful lot or had him on my side may even  
19          be a better way of looking at it.

20                    But David, we'll all miss you,  
21          Republicans, Democrats. And I believe you're  
22          already up there with God in heaven. And  
23          hopefully the angels with you are from the  
24          Democratic wing of the Democratic party.

25                    Thank you.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   (Laughter and applause.)

3           COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

4                   We will now hear from Councilman  
5 Michael Nutter.

6           COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam  
7 President.

8                   To Florence and the family, to all  
9 the elected officials, and certainly  
10 Congressman Brady, Mayor Street, and all of  
11 our distinguished guests. I will be  
12 uncharacteristically short.

13                  A good friend of mine, Perry Segal,  
14 gave me a poster one time which is now in my  
15 office. It's a quote from Martin Nemuller.  
16 And whenever I read it, I always think of  
17 David, given his impact that he's had on all  
18 of us, both in this chamber and throughout  
19 the body politic. I want to read that into  
20 the record and then make one other comment  
21 about our colleague.

22                  The quote is: In Germany they came  
23 first for the communists, and I didn't speak  
24 up because I wasn't a communist. Then they  
25 came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           because I wasn't a Jew.

3                   Then they came for the trade  
4           unionists, and I didn't speak up because I  
5           wasn't a tried unionist.

6                   Then they came for the Catholics,  
7           and I didn't speak up because I was a  
8           Protestant.

9                   And then they came for me, and by  
10          that time no one was left to speak up.

11                  Councilman Cohen always spoke up.  
12          And one of the things that we can all do in  
13          either listening to that quote or thinking  
14          about his service is to remind all of us,  
15          certainly in public service but in any walk  
16          of life, it's always appropriate to speak up.  
17          And he lived that every day of his life.  
18          That was one of the things I admired the most  
19          about him.

20                  And as Councilman O'Neill said and  
21          others have said, you'd always rather be on  
22          Councilman Cohen's side because you really  
23          knew that you were in a fight if you were on  
24          the other side, which in many instances was  
25          not a lot of fun. And I've had a couple of

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           those experiences.

3                     There were many wonderful moments  
4           certainly during my time and even before when  
5           I was here as a staff person. And a lot of  
6           recollections of just funny moments.

7                     One that comes to mind is, we were  
8           up very late one night on a very serious  
9           matter. And some members may recall that  
10          Councilman Cohen fell into a virtually  
11          uncontrollable laughter spell over in his  
12          seat.

13                    I think it had something to do with  
14          Councilman Frank DiCicco. I never -- I could  
15          never figure out what was so funny, but he  
16          laughed so long and so loud that it infected  
17          the rest of us, and we were all laughing  
18          during that moment.

19                    But probably the best time and the  
20          biggest laugh I ever had with the Councilman  
21          was in his office. And he was describing his  
22          intensity about whatever the position or  
23          issue of the day was, but he shared with me  
24          what really drove him to try, as I think  
25          Mayor Street laid out, what drove him to

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           drive such a hard bargain on whatever the  
3           issue was.

4                   And it really came down to Florence  
5           because he told me that in the early years --  
6           and maybe it continued on -- and he mentioned  
7           it at the Bread and Roses event just a few  
8           weeks back -- that when he would come home  
9           every night, as he came in the door, Florence  
10          would ask, Dave, what did you sell out on  
11          today?

12                   (Laughter.)

13                   COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And I just  
14          really can't imagine... And we all know  
15          Florence. And so, I mean, I now better  
16          understand why Councilman Cohen drove such a  
17          hard bargain.

18                   It may have been about the issue,  
19          but I think having to face Florence may have  
20          been one of the driving forces.

21                   I respect his work and his work  
22          ethic, learned a great deal from him, will  
23          miss him tremendously. And we've all been  
24          better to have had the experience with him.

25                   Thank you, Florence and the family

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           so much.

3                   (Applause.)

4                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We will

5           now hear from Councilwoman Blondell

6           Reynolds-Brown.

7                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,

8           Madam President.

9                   To Mr. Mayor, Chairman Brady, my  
10          colleagues, family and friends: I, too, have  
11          reflected enormously on the loss of our  
12          colleague and what lessons I can take from  
13          his life.

14                   And there are two highlights I wish  
15          to share. The moment in time is spring '03.  
16          The place is Chestnut Hill, Germantown  
17          Avenue. The time is 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock  
18          midnight or sometime thereafter at a campaign  
19          stop, and two candidates are left, councilman  
20          Cohen and myself.

21                   And during that time, he remarked  
22          how he had observed that in many places  
23          oftentimes there were only two left. And he  
24          therein gave me the ultimate compliment  
25          wherein he said -- And he never called me

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           Councilwoman. He always called me Blondell,  
3           which I appreciated.

4                   His comment was, you know, you're  
5           kind of like me. You are a tireless  
6           campaigner. And so, in that he assured me  
7           that with my continued hard work and  
8           continued to be with him late at night as the  
9           last two, we would both return to City  
10          Council.

11                   So the lesson in that is to be that,  
12          a tireless campaigner, prepared to speak to  
13          your issues.

14                   And then secondly, my last  
15          conversation with your dad, your husband, was  
16          the summer, August '05, wherein I called him  
17          to give them a heads up and alert him to the  
18          parks bill that Councilman Clarke and I had  
19          introduced, and wanted to enlist his support.

20                   Now, what we know about Councilman  
21          Cohen is, you don't make a call unprepared.  
22          You better be over prepared for the direct  
23          interrogation that follows.

24                   And he missed the point because I  
25          called only to give him a heads up, not to be

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           yet questioned on why we believed this was a  
3           good way to go.

4                   Lessen learned. Be overly prepared  
5           when you are about to have a conversation of  
6           any type of any issue with our former  
7           colleague, Councilman Cohen.

8                   He was a teacher of the legislative  
9           process. He was a teacher of the Roberts  
10          Rules of Order. He knew them like his name.  
11          He was a teacher of the language in the  
12          Charter. He also knew that like his name.

13                  And so, from that we've lost a great  
14          teacher of politics, of government, of public  
15          service.

16                  I'm glad I had a chance to have five  
17          years with him. Thank you.

18                  (Applause.)

19                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: At this  
20          time I would like to thank Mayor Street and  
21          Congressman Brady for having joined us for  
22          the service.

23                  They both have to leave for another  
24          very important commitment. And again, I want  
25          to thank both of you for attending.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   (Applause.)

3                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next  
4 speaker is Councilman W. Wilson Goode, Jr.

5                   COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam  
6 President.

7                   I'll speak very briefly on  
8 Councilman Cohen on a theme that he often  
9 had, the last laugh.

10                  I choose to remember Councilman  
11 David Cohen as pictured in one of the most  
12 recent snapshots of him, winning a veto  
13 override for his wage tax cut for the poor.

14                  During my time here, I never seen  
15 him more satisfied. And I was actually happy  
16 for him. While he didn't always smile so  
17 brightly on this Council floor, he always  
18 seemed to have the last laugh.

19                  Councilman Cohen was not afraid to  
20 stand on his own in this Council. Like many  
21 of us, he had to stand at times on the  
22 opposite side of our colleagues.

23                  But no one stood alone like Cohen.  
24 And each time he stood strong. He could  
25 argue against all 16 colleagues, one by one,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           and never reconsider his position.

3                   And as a vote was being taken, he  
4           knew he'd have the last laugh. He might just  
5           see us in court.

6                   (Laughter.)

7                   COUNCILMAN GOODE: Allow me to share  
8           one personal memory. The day after the  
9           primary election in 2003, the Councilman and  
10          I shared a laugh together.

11                   David Cohen called me to  
12          congratulate me on my second place finish  
13          behind Councilwoman Brown, and only 52 votes  
14          in front of him.

15                   At age 88, Cohen received 8,000 more  
16          votes than the next incumbent, 30,000 more  
17          votes than the top challenger, and 40,000  
18          more votes than any other challenger.

19                   At age 88, he was being nominated  
20          for an eighth term. In his last general  
21          election, he would still be the second  
22          highest vote getter in this Council, in full  
23          defiance of any thought of term limits.

24                   But David Cohen called me on that  
25          day after the primary election to

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           congratulate me on edging him out by 52  
3           votes.

4                     He said to me, Wilson, I want you to  
5           know I am very proud to now be the third  
6           African American Council person at large.

7                     (Laughter.)

8                     COUNCILMAN GOODE: It was one of the  
9           best laughs that we shared, but in a strange  
10          way I wasn't sure that he was entirely  
11          joking.

12                    I could imagine that at some point  
13          in which he disagreed with both me and  
14          Blondell, he might actually assert him in  
15          this Council as the third African American at  
16          large. Once again, he would have the last  
17          laugh. And that's what I'm going to miss the  
18          brother. Thank you.

19                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you.

20                    (Applause.)

21                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Our next  
22          speaker is Councilman Juan Ramos.

23                    COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Madam  
24          President.

25                    Fellow colleagues, Philadelphians,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           Florence and family, around 35 years ago,  
3           right around this time in October, I remember  
4           very clearly a member of City Council walked  
5           into an office in North Philadelphia around  
6           Franklin and Oxford Street.

7                     And he came up to the second floor.  
8           The office had been firebombed a few days  
9           before. It was in bad shape.

10                    And he comes up to that second floor  
11           to visit a group of militant Puerto Rican  
12           youth. And I happened to be one of them.

13                    And he walked in. And I looked at  
14           him. I said, this guy looks familiar.

15                    And he says, my name is David Cohen.  
16           I'm a Councilman. He says, I want to -- I  
17           come up here to tell you that I read the  
18           news. And I just want to see how you guys  
19           are doing.

20                    And we said, well, have a seat.

21                    And then he says, what are you guys  
22           into? He said, what do you believe in? And  
23           he stayed with us for at least two hours,  
24           just asking a whole lot of questions. Why  
25           are you going about things this way? Why do

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           you think this way?

3                     And you know, by the way, you know,  
4           I believe a lot of the things that you guys  
5           stand for.

6                     I served in this Council sitting  
7           behind David Cohen only for 18 months. And  
8           his gentleness, although at times he was not  
9           all that gentle with some of my fellow  
10          colleagues, but there was a gentleness about  
11          him that I picked up 35 years ago.

12                    In 1979 when David Cohen goes back  
13          into City Council, he just shows up at this  
14          neighborhood conference that I'm a part of.

15                    And he was not on the agenda. He  
16          was not -- You know, he was not scheduled to  
17          speak. And he comes up to me, and he says to  
18          me, Juan, I need to speak at this conference.

19                    And I said, how come you're waiting  
20          until the last minute to want to speak?

21                    He says, I only saw this the other  
22          day, but I need to speak.

23                    And I said, fine, I said, but you've  
24          got to be careful with making a political  
25          speech here.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           He said, okay.

3           So, I introduced David. And he went  
4 on to give this speech about how people  
5 needed to vote for him, to bring him back  
6 into the City Council.

7           (Laughter.)

8           COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Then he looked at  
9 me. He says, Juan, can you translate some of  
10 this? So I translated.

11           Then in January of last year, I come  
12 to City Council, and I land up sitting behind  
13 David Cohen. And David in his first address  
14 to me referred to me as Councilman Rojas.

15           And I said, okay.

16           Then the second time he addressed  
17 me, Councilman Rojas.

18           And I did not know -- I did not know  
19 how to correct him. I could not correct him.

20           So he kept on calling me Councilman  
21 Rojas for a while. And I didn't know if it  
22 was just that I brought memories of -- not  
23 that I was a good baseball player, but I  
24 thought maybe he was just thought of Cookie  
25 Rojas in 1961, the Phillies. Or that he

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           might have been thinking of my lifetime  
3           friend, Wilfredo Rojas. And he had me  
4           confused.

5                     It went on for a couple months, and  
6           I became Councilman Rojas. So I don't know  
7           what to do. One day he does his Councilman  
8           Rojas thing on me.

9                     And I say to him, in respect to the  
10          comments of Councilman Shapiro...

11                    (Laughter.)

12                    COUNCILMAN RAMOS: And he looked  
13          back. And he said, I heard you Juan.

14                    He never called me Councilman Rojas  
15          again.

16                    (Laughter.)

17                    COUNCILMAN RAMOS: David asked me to  
18          co-sponsor his wage tax cut for the working  
19          poor.

20                    He said, Juan, will you co-sponsor  
21          with me?

22                    I said, sure.

23                    And when we... And when we  
24          prevailed with the override of the Mayor's  
25          veto, he turned around to me and said, thank

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           you, Juan. And it made my short -- you know,  
3           my short time with David very, very  
4           meaningful.

5                       Sometimes I would hear people  
6           grumble, and I would get offended on a  
7           personal level because how can you grumble  
8           with the elder statesman. You know, we're  
9           supposed to put up with the elder statesmen  
10          at all times.

11                      I wanted to introduce a resolution  
12          that I'm going to introduce this coming  
13          Thursday. And I think -- And the guy that I  
14          have thought to co-sponsor that resolution  
15          was David.

16                      And it was behind the killing of a  
17          Puerto Rican nationalist in Puerto Rico about  
18          a month ago.

19                      And I said, if there's one person in  
20          this Council that could probably understand  
21          probably even some of the details of the  
22          belief of this one person that was killed by  
23          the F.B.I. in Puerto Rico, it's probably  
24          Councilman Cohen.

25                      And I got the news from the Council

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           President that he had passed. I will miss  
3           him.

4                   And I probably will also have the  
5           distinct bragging right to say that in those  
6           20 months that I sat behind David Cohen and  
7           that I've met with, and he called me to his  
8           office about a number of things, that I did  
9           not get to get into an argument with  
10          Councilman Cohen.

11                   So David, thank you for the great  
12          memories. And I know you look out for all of  
13          us as we continue to deliberate, and I hope  
14          in your name many, many days to come.

15                   Thank you, Madam President.

16                   (Applause.)

17                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're  
18          welcome.

19                   (Applause.)

20                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I invite  
21          State Representative Mark Cohen to the  
22          podium.

23                   STATE REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Thank  
24          you very much.

25                   Council President Verna, Majority

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           Leader Blackwell, Majority Whip Tasco,  
3           Minority Leader O'Neill, Minority Whip Rizzo,  
4           members of the City Council, family, friends,  
5           community leaders, Council staff, employees  
6           of the City of Philadelphia, and other  
7           governmental units, and citizens of  
8           Philadelphia in general, it is deeply  
9           gratifying to be with you today to celebrate  
10          the life and accomplishments and goals of  
11          David Cohen.

12                 Cookie Rojas could not be here  
13          today.

14                 (Laughter.)

15                 STATE REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: But he  
16          was, Councilman, one of my father's favorite  
17          baseball players. And he would take Denis  
18          and I to baseball games in the early 1960's.

19                 And they had twinight doubleheaders  
20          then. And my brother and I liked the  
21          twinight doubleheaders.

22                 And then, one day we did a twinight  
23          doubleheader that went into extra innings,  
24          and we thought that was real great.

25                 And then a year or so later we had a

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           twilight doubleheader in which both games  
3           went into extra innings.

4                   And finally around -- My father kept  
5           saying, have you had enough baseball yet?

6                   And finally about 3 or 4 o'clock in  
7           the morning as the second game was still  
8           going on in extra innings, Denis and I  
9           decided we had enough baseball and we left.

10                   And his life in many ways seems to  
11          be like that twilight doubleheader. It went  
12          on and on and on.

13                   It has been widely said that no  
14          one's achievements are his or hers alone.  
15          This is especially true in a governmental  
16          system of checks and balances, where making  
17          new things happen can be very difficult.

18                   Councilman David Cohen got a lot  
19          done, and many of his colleagues, friends,  
20          supporters, advisors and helpers in this room  
21          played a key role in the record he achieved  
22          and the life that he led.

23                   David Cohen knew that life was about  
24          choices, about time, money and the goals to  
25          be pursued.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   He viewed college education as more  
3           important than new cars, new clothes or new  
4           toys. He saw listening to people and  
5           figuring out ways to help them as more  
6           important than figuring out the stock market.

7                   He saw viewing people as individual  
8           persons was more important than trying to  
9           figure out what category they belonged in.

10                  He thought activism was a better  
11           choice than passivity and full examination of  
12           alternatives a better strategy than merely  
13           accepting whatever recommendation was given.

14                  The core of his life was the  
15           recognition of the common humanity of every  
16           person. He saw people on the basis of what  
17           they did, not on the basis of their most  
18           conspicuous characteristic.

19                  He knew that Florence Cohen was an  
20           outstanding public servant and not, quote  
21           unquote, just his wife.

22                  He knew the community leaders could  
23           be of any occupation. He knew that wisdom  
24           was often unaccompanied by extensive formal  
25           education.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   He was, as we all know, rather  
3       skeptical of authority. When a doctor would  
4       tell him he was okay in a doctor's specialty,  
5       David Cohen would grill him intensely.

6                   Are you saying that because you  
7       think I will die of something else first? He  
8       wanted to know.

9                   I may not die of something else  
10      first, he would say, and I want to make sure  
11      I'm not going to die of your disease.

12                  (Laughter.)

13                  STATE REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: His  
14      longevity was due to successful conquering of  
15      numerous diseases, not to any genetic  
16      immunity from disease.

17                  As a Councilman, he followed the  
18      lessons of his life. He saw choices where  
19      others did not. He saved the city scores of  
20      millions of dollars by getting rid of our  
21      fallout shelter program, and many millions  
22      more by getting rid of our longstanding  
23      incinerators.

24                  He saved the city \$1.5 billion over  
25      time from the large trash to steam

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           incinerator, in both construction and  
3           long-term operating costs, and countless  
4           millions more by killing the unwanted  
5           Germantown expressway in his first term.

6                     The issue is not bigger government  
7           or smaller government, he would say. The  
8           issue is better government.

9                     His opposition to extensive and  
10          needed projects also freed up land for  
11          development to create jobs and tax revenues  
12          for many years to come.

13                    His intense interest in helping  
14          those who needed help the most should not  
15          obscure his strong identification with middle  
16          class Philadelphia.

17                    He believed the community groups  
18          were pillars of livable communities, and he  
19          did all that he could to strengthen them.

20                    His lists of victories won,  
21          including mandatory retirement in the City of  
22          Philadelphia, reducing air pollution,  
23          expanding libraries, parks, recreation  
24          centers, and school funding, banning the  
25          giving away of free cigarettes, and directing

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           that the pension funds of the City of  
3           Philadelphia divest itself from tobacco  
4           company stocks.

5                     He worked successfully for the City  
6           Council to keep control over Charter  
7           amendments by killing the proposal for  
8           Charter Revision Commission.

9                     He kept alive the educational  
10          experiment that became Philadelphia's first  
11          charter school.

12                    He patiently negotiated the details  
13          of the Center City Special Services District,  
14          the prototype for a number of other special  
15          service districts.

16                    He encouraged volunteerism in  
17          schools, parks and communities, and he felt  
18          that the sense of ownership and pride that  
19          volunteerism helped create was far more  
20          important than any savings to the city  
21          budget.

22                    From the very beginning of his first  
23          Council term, he constantly tried to recruit  
24          good people. His current staff -- will they  
25          please stand -- consists of, in alphabetical

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           order...

3                   (Applause.)

4                   STATE REPRESENTATIVE COHEN:

5           ...Ellen Berkowitz, Doc Brown, Marlene Goss,

6           Bill Greenlee, Robert Jaffe, Lynn Ricker,

7           Charles Taylor, and Verna Tyner.

8                   (Applause.)

9                   STATE REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: Because

10          of that team's excellence in constituent

11          service, calls continue to pour in to that

12          office in the two weeks after David Cohen's

13          death. Voters in Philadelphia do not accept

14          death as an excuse.

15                   (Laughter.)

16                  STATE REPRESENTATIVE COHEN: They

17          need help with various problems, and they

18          know that Councilman Cohen's office has

19          people who can help them.

20                  These are highly skilled and

21          dedicated people who would be a great asset

22          to the City Council as a whole or to

23          individual Council persons or to many city

24          departments and private sector employers.

25          David Cohen has left city government with all

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           star team of employees who are great  
3           resources for this city's future.

4                     In the fall of 1966, my father would  
5           drive me to the University of Pennsylvania  
6           campus on Sunday nights, where I was a  
7           college freshman living in the dorms.

8                     We would talk about his recent  
9           election as Democratic leader of the 17th  
10          ward and about the work I was doing as a  
11          political science major.

12                    One of my assignments as a freshman  
13          political science student was to interview  
14          Philadelphia City Council members then in  
15          office.

16                    And I told him that many seemed worn  
17          out and lacking in ideas as to how to solve  
18          Philadelphia's many problems.

19                    I urged him to run for the vacant  
20          seat in the 8th Council District. And I  
21          helped put up posters and write campaign  
22          literature and distribute sample ballots to  
23          committee people throughout northwest  
24          Philadelphia for him.

25                    I clearly remember my excitement on

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           the primary and general election eves. But I  
3           had no idea that his initial election as  
4           Councilman for the 8th District would have  
5           the lasting consequences that it did.

6                     The fact that U.S. Senator Joseph S.  
7           Clark was his honorary campaign chairman, and  
8           that U.S. Senator Hugh Scott was the honorary  
9           campaign chairman for his Republican opponent  
10          was perhaps a sign of the race's ultimate  
11          significance. Both U.S. Senators then lived  
12          in the 8th Council District in Chestnut Hill.

13                    The City Council he entered in 1968  
14          was the last all-male City Council in  
15          Philadelphia's history.

16                    Ann Verna was there as aide to her  
17          father, newly elected Councilman and former  
18          magistrate William Cibotti.

19                    10 of the 17 Councilmen were  
20          freshmen, an all-time high since the  
21          Democratic sweep, led by Joseph Clark in  
22          1951. City Council then was under staffed,  
23          under involved and under appreciated.

24                    Only three of the Council members  
25          were African American, and two of the three,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           future Clerk of Courts Edgar C. Campbell and  
3           future Judge, Charles Durham, were freshmen.

4                     The third black Councilman then,  
5           Thomas MacIntosh, died the day after my  
6           father did, after one of the longest careers  
7           in city government ever.

8                     City Council has come a long way  
9           since David Cohen entered in 1968, and each  
10          of you have been an important part of that.

11                    I'm sure he would want you to  
12          continue to try, as he did, to live up to  
13          Leon Sullivan's words of praise after City  
14          Council passed bills that my father had  
15          pushed with other Council members,  
16          guaranteeing 60 days' notice for mass  
17          layoffs, setting up affirmative action  
18          programs for city contracts, and divesting  
19          city pension funds from companies doing  
20          business in South Africa.

21                    City Council, the Reverend Leon  
22          Sullivan said, at a prayer breakfast in the  
23          early 1980's is, quote, the best legislative  
24          body in the free world. The best legislative  
25          body in the free world.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   Councilman David Cohen would want  
3           you to do everything you possibly can to make  
4           that statement a long-term prophecy.

5                   Thank you, dad, for all you have  
6           done for all of us.

7                   Thank you, City Council members,  
8           fellow citizens and friends, for all your  
9           support and for all your efforts to make  
10          Philadelphia's future even better than its  
11          often glorious past.

12                   (Applause.)

13                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next  
14          speaker is Councilman Cohen's daughter,  
15          Sherrie Cohen, Esquire.

16                   MS. COHEN: It is wonderful being  
17          here today in these chambers to celebrate the  
18          life of my father, Councilman David Cohen,  
19          who died two weeks ago today.

20                   We, the family, are very grateful to  
21          City Council for holding today's special  
22          meeting in his honor.

23                   My father loved nothing more than  
24          being a Philadelphia city Council person. He  
25          would always introduce himself to people by

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           saying I am a politician, but not a  
3           traditional one. I am a Council person for  
4           the people.

5                     My father voted as if our lives  
6           depended upon it. In considering any issue,  
7           bill or resolution, he would ask, is it good  
8           for poor people? Is it good for working  
9           people? Is it good for people of color? Is  
10          it good for women? Is it good for lesbians,  
11          gays, bisexuals, transgendered people? Is it  
12          good for seniors? Based on that question  
13          alone, he would make his decision.

14                    His loyalty on the issues of the day  
15          was simply to the people, not to political  
16          power brokers, not to mayors, not to fellow  
17          ward leaders, not to fellow Council members.

18                    At times, my father stood alone in  
19          these chambers, yet he was not truly alone.  
20          He knew that you, the people, the activists,  
21          organizers, advocates, his fellow trouble  
22          makers, were buy his side.

23                    So today, we also celebrate you,  
24          everyone who has worked with him over the  
25          years. For my father could not have been

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           such a powerful voice, had powerful activist  
3           communities not been by his side.

4                   The walls of these chambers will  
5           forever echo with his powerful voice, a voice  
6           of outrage against man's inhumanity, against  
7           poverty in the midst of plenty, against  
8           needless human suffering, a voice of  
9           compassion and love that the poorest among  
10          us, the most victimized, the most vulnerable  
11          be given the same opportunity as you and I,  
12          to live out their lives in dignity and  
13          fulfill their dreams.

14                   My father loved Philadelphia so  
15          much. I recall attending a City Council  
16          hearing on the crisis of domestic violence a  
17          few years ago.

18                   His voice rang out. For  
19          Philadelphia to be a great city, it must be  
20          not only a city where the outer face of its  
21          neighborhoods are transformed but also one  
22          where the inner life of its people are  
23          transformed. I want Philadelphia to be the  
24          city which puts an end to domestic violence,  
25          he proclaimed.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   A woman in the audience later showed  
3       me a note she wrote. It read, David Cohen  
4       for President.

5                   I want to share with you how my  
6       father consoled me a few days before he died.  
7       I was crying quietly in his hospital room.  
8       Though his eyes were closed, he felt the  
9       heaviness of my heart.

10                  And he said, don't cry, Sherrie.  
11       The world is over populated. Everyone has to  
12       go sometime to make way for others.

13                  My dear father, you with the twinkle  
14       in your eye, you have now left us, and you  
15       have left your beloved city more humane  
16       because you were here.

17                  You were never one to look backward.  
18       You looked only to the future. And you have  
19       blazed a trail for us all to follow together.

20                  May the phrase, what would David  
21       Cohen do but be our guide. As long as we  
22       fight injustice, as long as we serve the  
23       common interest, as long as we continue my  
24       father's legacy, and be feisty, fierce,  
25       fearless and ferocious as was he, David Cohen

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           will always be by our side.

3                     (Applause.)

4                     COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you

5                     Our next speaker is the Honorable

6           Angel Ortiz.

7                     MR. ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam

8           Chair -- the Mayor and Congressman have

9           left -- and my former colleagues.

10                    David Cohen loved this body. He

11           loved City Council. He was jealous of its

12           power. That's why he admonished John Street

13           when he said that he had made us less than a

14           rubber stamp.

15                    He fought to make this body an equal

16           part of government, an equal partner. And he

17           called this hall, this great room, the

18           people's room. Not our room but the people's

19           room.

20                    He said, we represent the people,

21           not the corporate interests, not the big

22           power brokers, not the individuals with

23           money.

24                    We are here to make sure that

25           government -- government -- answers to the

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           rights of the people, those that have no  
3           voice, those that have no great lawyers,  
4           those individuals that sit in the hallway,  
5           hat in hand, waiting in lines to make their  
6           wishes known.

7                     And he believed, as a Democratic, in  
8           government. He didn't believe in little  
9           government. He believed in government, in  
10          making government work for the people.

11                    When a body sits and gives great  
12          corporate interests like Wal-Mart tax  
13          write-offs, pieces of land, he knows that  
14          government at that time is not working for  
15          the people. And he knew what to do at that  
16          time.

17                    (Applause.)

18                    MR. ORTIZ: When he saw banks giving  
19          loans and being part of the great tragedy of  
20          apartheid, and he saw that when I first got  
21          into City Council I put a little stamp of  
22          Nelson Mandela on my desk.

23                    And he fought against the banking  
24          interests of this city. And they invaded our  
25          offices, telling us, don't you understand

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           that this will drive business away?

3                     And David said, the business that  
4           supports slavery and apartheid do not need to  
5           do business in Philadelphia, a message that  
6           very few at that time were willing to adhere  
7           to that. Very few were willing to stand up  
8           for that.

9                     Gays and lesbians... I remember  
10          when we were just a few in this Council that  
11          stood up. Now when we present an issue of  
12          gays and lesbian rights, everybody stands up,  
13          everybody is there.

14                    But it did not come without a  
15          struggle. It did not come without  
16          leadership. It did not come without that  
17          voice that was willing to stand by itself and  
18          say, this is wrong.

19                    And that's what he loved about City  
20          Council because this is where the people  
21          came, the homeless, the union workers, the  
22          individuals that were looking for someone to  
23          stand up and say, you are not alone.

24                    That's why David was never alone,  
25          because he knew that he had the people. And

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           we as a people, and we as officials, and we  
3           as political individuals have to understand  
4           that we have to make government respond and  
5           work for the people.

6                     We cannot make Philadelphia a city  
7           of the have and the have nots. We cannot  
8           make Philadelphia a city where only buildings  
9           get built that are worth a hundred or five  
10          hundred thousand dollars and P.H.A. homes.

11                    We got to make homes in the City of  
12          Philadelphia that are affordable to the  
13          working class. And we've got to make  
14          Philadelphians build those homes in  
15          Philadelphia. And we got to make  
16          Philadelphia --

17                    (Applause.)

18                    MR. ORTIZ: -- and Philadelphians  
19          build the next Convention Center in  
20          Philadelphia.

21                    And we got to make sure that each  
22          and every one of us is there when that  
23          happens, because that pays honor to the  
24          memory of David Cohen.

25                    And we have to make sure that what

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           Wal-Mart does not come in and expand in  
3           Philadelphia.

4                   (Applause.)

5                   MR. ORTIZ: And that will stand for  
6           the legacy of Dave Cohen.

7                   Those are the things that Dave Cohen  
8           fights about. Those are the things Dave  
9           Cohen stood for, and those are the things I  
10          cherish about him. And he loved -- He loved  
11          this body. Make it do honor to him. Thank  
12          you.

13                   (Applause.)

14                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next  
15          speaker is Patrick Eiding, President of the  
16          AFL-CIO.

17                   MR. EIDING: Madam President,  
18          Council members, family members and friends,  
19          David Cohen.

20                   Let me just say that I am personally  
21          pleased and honored to be here before the  
22          Council members to remember -- and the  
23          public -- to remember the good friend in  
24          Councilman David Cohen.

25                   We in the labor movement, as has

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           been referred to here many times today, very  
3           affectionately refer to Councilman Cohen as  
4           the friend of little people, the speaker of  
5           the working people. And that happens to be  
6           us.

7                     As President of the Labor Council  
8           here in Philadelphia, I want to thank him and  
9           Florence for all they've done for the working  
10          people in this city.

11                    And when I say working people, I'm  
12          not just talking about organized labor. I'm  
13          talking about all working people, because  
14          he's done so much for us and he worked so  
15          hard for us.

16                    But because of a problem out of town  
17          that one of my vice presidents, Thomas Paine  
18          Cronin, couldn't be here today -- And Tom is  
19          a personal friend of the Cohen family. And I  
20          felt that it was only fitting, because he  
21          speaks from the Council Executive Committee,  
22          and he speaks as President of his Council,  
23          that only be fitting that I would read his  
24          statement.

25                    David Cohen's death is a loss for

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           the labor movement in Philadelphia. It's a  
3           loss for poor people, for minorities, for  
4           progressive politics, and for the working  
5           class of our city.

6                     It's a loss for everyone, really,  
7           because the causes championed by David Cohen  
8           were causes in the long and short run made  
9           this and continue to make it a decent and  
10          more just society.

11                    If you read through some of the  
12          obituaries that have appeared since David  
13          Cohen died early this month, there isn't a  
14          great deal said about his ties to organized  
15          labor.

16                    In fact, David Cohen and his wife  
17          Florence met as organizers for the United  
18          Federal Workers Union in the 1930's.

19                    His subsequent career as a fighter  
20          for civil rights, workers' rights and the  
21          environment, and a whole host of progressive  
22          political issues, comes out of that early  
23          connection to the labor movement.

24                    David Cohen was not just a lawyer.  
25          He was a people's lawyer. What a difference.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   Privilege can field any number of  
3           sycophants whenever it chooses. Power has an  
4           army of lawyers at its disposal. David Cohen  
5           was on the other side of the barricades.

6                   Mr. Cohen understood that privilege  
7           is rapacious and destructive and that will  
8           endlessly speak to expand its prerogatives  
9           unless confronted and challenged. He rose to  
10          that challenge.

11                  When you think about it, David Cohen  
12          could have been many things or anything,  
13          really. He was talented, intelligent and  
14          energetic. He could have been a corporate  
15          owner or the owner of a flourishing business.

16                  He could easily have devoted his  
17          days to enriching himself. Instead, he lent  
18          his considerable energies to fighting the  
19          powers that be.

20                  So, for instance, in the early  
21          1950's, a period of political hysteria that  
22          makes the run-up to the Iraq war seem tame,  
23          if not congenial, Mr. Cohen served as the  
24          attorney for the United Electrical Workers,  
25          Local 107. The UE was one of the CIO's most

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           militant unions, and as a direct consequence  
3           was one of the first to fall victim to  
4           McCarthy bate-biting.

5                     It took guts to stand up to  
6           McCarthyism. It was not only the time David  
7           Cohen did so, but also took principle. David  
8           Cohen was not for sale and he would never be  
9           intimidated.

10                    Others will cite his efforts on  
11           behalf of civil rights, civil liberties and  
12           the environment, and against imperialist war.

13                    While I join in saluting his memory  
14           for all those and more, it is his aid and  
15           assistance to organized labor that we in  
16           District Council 47 recall most vividly and  
17           with gratitude.

18                    Government employees are a favorite  
19           scapegoat for reactionary and self-seeking  
20           politicians of both parties.

21                    In the late '80s and early '90s our  
22           union, along with others, representing city  
23           employees, came to be portrayed by certain  
24           politicians and by the corporate media as  
25           somehow responsible for Philadelphia's fiscal

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           problems, and by extension its cultural and  
3           demographic decline.

4                     Like the anti-communism of the '50s,  
5           the demagoguery that proved palatable to many  
6           otherwise liberal minds, it didn't fool David  
7           Cohen.

8                     In the darkest days of that period,  
9           he was one of the few real friends that  
10          municipal workers had on Philadelphia City  
11          Council.

12                    There certainly was no glory in it  
13          for him. But he could see the scorn poured  
14          on firemen, trash truck drivers and social  
15          workers for exactly what it was and is, the  
16          politics of class privilege.

17                    David Cohen had integrity, he had  
18          passion, and he had courage. He understood  
19          how powerful privilege is. He knew what it  
20          could and would do to strike down its  
21          opponents.

22                    And that knowledge guided him to one  
23          small victory and then the next. More people  
24          are in his debt than could ever possibly know  
25          it.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   Speaking for myself, as well as  
3       District Council 47, I would like to say that  
4       we'll miss not only the results of his  
5       activism and his leadership, but just as  
6       importantly its example.

7                   I would just like to say, I'm  
8       reading that for Tom Cronin. And I'm sure  
9       that I don't do the justice that he could do  
10      with it, because I know how strongly he felt  
11      for the Councilman.

12                  But I will say that when I read  
13      that, that I think I echo pretty much  
14      everybody in the labor movement how they felt  
15      about this very strong Council person who  
16      fought so strongly for us.

17                  We want to thank him for all did,  
18      and thank his family for allowing him to do  
19      that for us.

20                  Thank you.

21                  (Applause.)

22                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next  
23      speaker is Burt Seigel, Executive Director of  
24      the Jewish Community Relations Council.

25                  Welcome.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   MR. SEIGEL: Thank you, Madam  
3       President.

4                   I'd also like to thank the members  
5       of Council and of the Cohen family for  
6       affording me the opportunity to be part of  
7       this moving memorial for David.

8                   A number of years ago, I had the  
9       distinct pleasure of interviewing David for a  
10      Jewish history project at the Feinstein  
11      Center at Temple University.

12                  The interviews probably should have  
13      taken no more than 15 hours, but by the 40th  
14      or so -- Those of you who know David, not  
15      surprised -- we had barely scratched the  
16      surface.

17                  David reminisced and reflected on a  
18      long career of public service. It was a  
19      lesson in history, in Philadelphia politics,  
20      but most of all in moral courage.

21                  Interviewing him gave me insight in  
22      what motivated him. David was a man who  
23      realized that the world could only be a  
24      better place if we made it happen, and that  
25      it certainly wouldn't happen by itself. And

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           he devoted so much of himself to that end.

3                     The interviews contained a good bit  
4           of humor as well. At one point, he said to  
5           me, you know, Burt, the rich don't really  
6           need lawyers. They always find a way to get  
7           what they want anyhow; it's the poor who need  
8           the lawyers to fight for them. And fight for  
9           them he did, up until the very end.

10                    As we had heard a little bit earlier  
11           from Cantor Friedman, in Judaism we're taught  
12           that on Yom Kippur, God decides who will live  
13           and who will die in the coming year.

14                    There is also the belief that when  
15           someone is a pretty decent and moral person,  
16           he or she is given the remainder of the year  
17           to continue his or her work on earth.

18                    When David Cohen was taken from us  
19           shortly before Yom Kippur, it was no surprise  
20           to many of us that it came at that time of  
21           the year, for David was still continuing his  
22           work until his strength gave out.

23                    And I believe that God wanted to  
24           give him every moment to complete his  
25           important tasks.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   I don't imagine David would have  
3       considered himself a very religious man, but  
4       his life's work, his pursuit of justice, his  
5       being a champion of those in need and the  
6       powerless, his being a thorn in the side of  
7       those who had power but did not always use it  
8       justly was so very much in keeping what his  
9       faith taught him.

10                  David's righteous indignation when  
11       he saw injustice, when he saw poverty, when  
12       he saw bigotry and prejudice, was in fact  
13       very much like the righteous indignation of  
14       the Biblical prophets, of Micah, of Jeremiah  
15       of Isaiah.

16                  And like these Hebrew prophets,  
17       David did not always take the easy or popular  
18       paths. They, too, challenged the powerful  
19       and the too comfortable.

20                  And they, too, like David, was  
21       sometimes told that no one was listening to  
22       them, and to sit down and to be quiet.

23                  But those who are gathered here  
24       today know so well how much we would have  
25       lost if David had ever heeded the words of

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           the naysayers.

3                   He was such a constant voice for  
4           what was right for our city and our nation  
5           that we sometimes probably took him for  
6           granted.

7                   But for so many of us, David was our  
8           compass and our conscience. And that voice,  
9           sometimes a whisper, but more often than not,  
10          a loud shout to remind us of what was right,  
11          stay plays in my ears.

12                  He will shortly be missed by us all,  
13          but the best way to honor his memory is not  
14          what we say here today, but what we do  
15          tomorrow and next week, and in the next year,  
16          and in all the years to come.

17                  (Applause.)

18                  MR. SEIGEL: We are taught it is not  
19          our responsibility to complete the task of  
20          repairing this world, but we cannot refrain  
21          from that task either. After all, if we ever  
22          did, what would David say to us?

23                  Thank you.

24                  (Applause.)

25                  COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           Mr. Seigel.

3                     We will now from Jonathan Stein,  
4           Esquire, member of the Community Legal  
5           Services.

6                     Mr. Stein.

7                     MR. STEIN: Thank you, Council  
8           President Verna, and members of City Council,  
9           for your thoughtfulness in making this  
10          memorial service happen here today.

11                    David's dedication to the poor and  
12          powerless was his shining light. Over the  
13          many decades of his life he was an  
14          extraordinary inspiration and our conscience.

15                    Today, whether conservative or  
16          liberal or mainstream, some seem ill at ease  
17          or restrained from being loyal friends and  
18          advocates for the powerless and the  
19          dispossessed.

20                    David did not take polls, nor did he  
21          take direction from editorial pages. Rather,  
22          he consulted his heart, and his own  
23          conscience for the principles of justice and  
24          fairness that guided his actions.

25                    In the beginning of the recent tax

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2       debates, where the working poor were largely  
3       invisible, David confided in me that he had  
4       felt remiss that in all his years since the  
5       1930's he had ignored the issue of the  
6       regressive wage tax impact on the working  
7       poor, something that contributes to the  
8       truism that the poor pay more.

9           So, at the age of 88, David took up  
10      a new cause, a wage tax cut for the working  
11      poor, believing that progressivity and  
12      fairness was the essence of tax reform.

13           Even though the Tax Reform  
14      Commission had voted down this idea 14 to 1,  
15      David, along with a wonderful support from a  
16      large majority of this City Council, passed  
17      an ordinance to at last establish a wage tax  
18      break for the working poor.

19           This was but one milestone in the  
20      legacy of David Cohen. He inspired us all  
21      during his long life. My fervent hope is  
22      that he will continue to inspire us far into  
23      this new century.

24           Thank you.

25           (Applause.)

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We will  
3 now hear from Stanley Shapiro, Esquire.

4                   MR. SHAPIRO: Hi, folks. I worked  
5 here 22 years. I very rarely got to speak  
6 extemporaneously to this body because so  
7 often I could just sit back, relax, and hear  
8 David exclaim my thoughts.

9                   He's not here to do that any more.  
10 I've kind of feared this day for over 20  
11 years, never really thinking that it was  
12 going to come, it was going to happen.

13                   Not that it was easy working for  
14 David. I remember in 1979 -- No. It's 1981.  
15 Those years do run together. I found out  
16 that there was going to be a technical staff  
17 on City Council. And I came to the  
18 Councilman and asked him if he could help me  
19 out possibly to get a place there.

20                   I had been on the staff of Community  
21 Legal Services for a number of years, and  
22 thought that it would be a good time to see  
23 what the inside of government was like,  
24 rather than always being on the outside  
25 hammering in.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                     David wanted to know why he hadn't  
3       seen me lately. I had worked in his campaign  
4       in 1979, but since then he had seen me more  
5       with certain Councilmen of very strong  
6       rhetorical gifts, Councilman Street, because  
7       I was working on some housing issues with  
8       him.

9                     Councilman Cohen wanted to know,  
10      because he was very practical and very  
11      specific in all things, he wanted to know if  
12      I came to work for Council, would he ever get  
13      to see me.

14                    And I said, well, I thought that  
15      that was likely, if he had work for me to do.  
16      But actually, I thought, as somebody kind of  
17      inclined to the left in political things,  
18      that I would be working a lot more with  
19      Councilman Street and some others.

20                    Turned out that there was no one who  
21      was more steadfast, no one who was more  
22      strong, no one who was more reliable, no one  
23      who was more insistent in carrying out the  
24      progressive agenda than David.

25                    And there was no one else that you

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           could ever go to that would epitomize that  
3           dedication the way he did.

4                   And I've got to say, over the years,  
5           although I always technically was on the  
6           staff of -- the technical staff of City  
7           Council, working for the President's office,  
8           Somehow people got me confused with somebody  
9           on Councilman Cohen's staff. And that was  
10          always a proud thing when I hear it, and  
11          something which I will treasure.

12                   I now have the difficulty of getting  
13          up every morning and wanting to have the same  
14          kind of thought that I always had for the  
15          last 24 or 25 years. And that is, what would  
16          Councilman Cohen think of this idea or that  
17          idea. I can't wait to talk to him about it.

18                   And many of us, I'm sure, have that  
19          same notion, because he was always so open.  
20          He was always so willing and interested in  
21          hearing from, not just talking to, other  
22          people who had ideas that he found  
23          interesting or that he thought he could  
24          communicate with.

25                   You would not necessarily know that

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           on the floor because he was giving his piece  
3           so often. And it wasn't necessarily an  
4           indication of dialogue.

5                     But when he was alone with one or  
6           more of people he thought his friends, he  
7           could stay with them forever.

8                     He would engage in a dialogue. He  
9           would be interested in their most boring  
10          comments, and you would always feel that you  
11          were able to make your point of view heard,  
12          listened to, and often three, four or five  
13          weeks later when you least expected it, acted  
14          on.

15                    So, this is a horrible loss. But  
16          his memory will absolutely -- and his  
17          example -- live with all of us for a long  
18          time.

19                    Thank you.

20                    (Applause.)

21                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,  
22          Stan.

23                    At this time the Chief Clerk will  
24          read a condolence resolution from the  
25          Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   CHIEF CLERK:  Whereas, Councilman  
3       David Cohen, an extraordinary father, uncle,  
4       brother, grandfather and friend moved from  
5       labor to reward on Monday, October 3,, 2005;

6                   And whereas, Philadelphia County and  
7       the State of Pennsylvania has suffered an  
8       extremely great loss.

9                   Councilman David Cohen was good to  
10      Philadelphia, as Philadelphia was good to  
11      Councilman David Cohen.

12                  He was a white man with a colorblind  
13      heart and a colorblind commitment.  He lived  
14      it every day.

15                  In light of his legacy, I strongly  
16      urge members of the City Council, the  
17      Democratic City Committee, the Mayor, and all  
18      ward leaders of the City of Philadelphia not  
19      to replicate him because you can not.  He was  
20      one of a kind.

21                  Now, therefore, the Pennsylvania  
22      House of Representatives, by and through the  
23      Honorable W. Curtis Thomas, stands at ease in  
24      its celebration of the life of Councilman  
25      David Cohen, and directs that a copy of this

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           resolution, sponsored by State Representative  
3           W. Curtis Thomas, be presented to the family  
4           of Councilman David Cohen.

5                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you  
6           very much.

7                   Our next speaker is Christie Balka,  
8           Executive Director of Bread and Roses.

9                   MS. BALKA: It's been said that  
10          David Cohen was the patron saint of lost  
11          causes, never mind that he won more than his  
12          share.

13                  There's a deeper truth at work here,  
14          I think. Dave understood that causes,  
15          whether won or lost, are about people.

16                  He steadfastly refused to give up on  
17          people who are neither rich nor powerful. by  
18          conventional standards, but have fierce hopes  
19          and dreams.

20                  Whether he sought them out or they  
21          sought him out, Dave would do whatever it  
22          took to guide them through the political  
23          process.

24                  The popularity of their issues,  
25          their previous political experience or lack

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           of it, their racial, ethnic, religious  
3           backgrounds, gender or sexual orientation  
4           made no difference. He cared only about  
5           people and the justice of their causes.

6                     I met Dave during his first race for  
7           City Council in 1967. I was 11 years old.  
8           And my father and I canvassed the  
9           neighborhood, distributing David's campaign  
10          materials. He was my hero then.

11                    But my real connection to him  
12          developed after I became Director of Bread  
13          and Roses Community Fund which provides  
14          grants and technical assistance to grass  
15          roots social justice groups in Philadelphia.

16                    Dave and Florence were regular  
17          contributors, and I often referred our  
18          grantees to Dave's office, especially when  
19          they were interested in creating any sort of  
20          city-wide change.

21                    Initially I marveled at how  
22          patiently he listened to their problems and  
23          helped them develop solutions. And then I  
24          came to understand this as the norm.

25                    Last winter when Bread and Roses was

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           considering giving Florence and Dave the  
3           annual Paul Robson Award, we consulted with a  
4           number of our grantees.

5                   They responded with incredible  
6           enthusiasm. Many of them saw Dave not just  
7           as a politician who was responsive to their  
8           concerns, but as a true ally and friend who  
9           felt they could always count on.

10                   In the last few months, I've heard a  
11          lot of stories about how David extended  
12          himself to do things for which there was  
13          little public recognition, the promise of few  
14          votes and no campaign contributions, simply  
15          because they were the right things to do.

16                   One person told me -- and I'm  
17          quoting here -- I remember David coming out  
18          on a very cold January night when we were  
19          holding an around the clock event at City  
20          Hall to free Nelson Mandella.

21                   He came several times and spoke with  
22          the crowd and with individuals. He could  
23          have comfortably come out after work and gone  
24          home to his warm house, but he didn't. He  
25          was there with us into the night.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   Another said, oh, he helps our union  
3       out a lot. And she recalled him attending  
4       every single rally that janitors held several  
5       years ago as part of an effort to organize  
6       Center City office buildings. She also  
7       remembered some really cold weather.

8                   I remember him unobtrusively  
9       slipping into a line of activists who were  
10      blocking traffic, rush hour traffic, at Broad  
11      and Chestnut two years ago, demanding that a  
12      certain U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania resign  
13      from leadership, after that Senator compared  
14      gay sex to incest.

15                  Dave went out of his way to do  
16      things for groups that others were all too  
17      willing to write off, people on death row,  
18      workers exposed to toxic substances, homeless  
19      people, high school students, survivors of  
20      medical experiments in prison, neighborhood  
21      activists, environmentalists, labor and  
22      consumer groups, immigrants and others.

23                  Indeed, Philadelphians know about  
24      the accomplishments of many of these groups  
25      because of work they did in partnership with

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           Dave and his excellent staff.

3                   When I arrived at Dave's funeral two  
4           weeks ago, a formerly homeless activist got  
5           in line behind me and said, who's going to  
6           fight for us now?

7                   Well, she needn't worry. Dave not  
8           only fought for others; he showed others how  
9           to fight for themselves.

10                   He knew that regardless of whether a  
11           cause is won or lost, people develop new  
12           skills, insights, connections in the process,  
13           and this equips them for an even better fight  
14           the next time around. And I think the media  
15           have pointed out how much he relished a good  
16           fight.

17                   Anyway, this may be why he was able  
18           to work so patiently over the years with so  
19           many groups of people who have little, except  
20           for hopes and dreams, and how he was able to  
21           develop in them a sense of their own power.

22                   Last week one of Bread and Roses  
23           grantees wrote to me that Dave and his  
24           staff -- and again I'm quoting -- Dave and  
25           his staff treated me in the groups I've

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           worked with as having ultimate strength,  
3           ultimate vision, and therefore ultimate voice  
4           in City Hall.

5                     One way we can keep Dave's memory  
6           alive is by refusing, by absolutely refusing  
7           to give up on people who are neither rich nor  
8           powerful in any conventional sense, but whose  
9           causes are just.

10                    Imagine his surprise at finding  
11           himself in the majority.

12                    (Applause.)

13                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our final  
14           speaker is the Judge of the Court of Common  
15           Please, Denis Cohen. Denis.

16                    JUDGE COHEN: Thank you.

17                    Madam President, members of City  
18           Council, distinguished guests. This is an  
19           open letter to my dad. I guess you can call  
20           it part two.

21                    Two weeks and a couple of hours have  
22           passed. It's hard to imagine, after all the  
23           years as a giant your family and a giant in  
24           Philadelphia, you are no longer with us as  
25           you were.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   Many beautiful columns have been  
3       written. One of the most touching to me was  
4       by Claude Lewis.

5                   Noting that you died of heart  
6       failure, he poetically concluded that your  
7       heart gave way because you used so much.

8                   I think you actually lived as long  
9       as you did precisely because you used your  
10      heart so much.

11                  You taught me, the family, your  
12      employees, all the constituents you helped,  
13      and the rest of Philadelphia what love is and  
14      how to love.

15                  Even though you worked 24/7, you  
16      always had time for me. You could be in a  
17      Council session, meeting with the Mayor, the  
18      Council President, but if I called you made a  
19      point to find time to talk. At any time if I  
20      had an issue or a problem, you were always  
21      able to work with me as soon as possible,  
22      with a never ending supply of patience, love  
23      and support, whether you were sick or well.

24                  You gave me your wisdom, insights  
25      and assistance that was perfect for who I am.

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           Every time I was not feeling well, you were  
3           there to comfort me, even if you were much  
4           sicker.

5                       When I was in the hospital after  
6           this most recent Labor Day weekend, you, dad,  
7           sick as you were, insisted on coming to see  
8           me, although I told you not to. When you  
9           came to visit, I could tell how uncomfortable  
10          and ill you were.

11                      And at no point in your life did you  
12          ever ask me or anyone or expect a thank you,  
13          an acknowledgment, or anything else in  
14          return.

15                      Your act of love, your act from the  
16          heart was satisfaction enough. And your love  
17          for me was duplicated by your love for my  
18          wonderful siblings, Mark, Sherrie and Judy.

19                      Many of my cousins consider you,  
20          their uncle Dave, to be their second father  
21          for all your loving kindness to them. I.

22                      Was truly touched by one of your  
23          comments as you, in retrospect, lay dying in  
24          your hospital bed several weeks ago. You  
25          noted that you had many victories and

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           accomplishments in your life.

3                     But your true legacy, you said, was  
4           not that, but your family. You wanted your  
5           family to continue to work together with each  
6           other and to take care of each other.

7                     What a proud and devoted father  
8           you've been. I remember the first time you  
9           tried to impart that wisdom. I was six and  
10          my brother Mark was eight. That's my  
11          brother, Mark, the State Rep.

12                    We just had a typical brotherly  
13          argument for that age. And you, dad said it  
14          was important that we work together and we  
15          take care of each other.

16                    At age six I thought it sounded like  
17          pie in the sky, but that is precisely what  
18          has happened.

19                    When you were referring to your  
20          family back in the hospital, I wondered if  
21          you're really including Philadelphians and  
22          all of mankind as part of an extended family,  
23          if you will.

24                    Your life was dedicated to making  
25          sure that everyone's humanity was respected

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           and people were supported, especially those  
3           in need.

4                     You provided a voice to the  
5           voiceless, hope to the hopeless, and  
6           political empowerment to the politically  
7           powerless, all of it from your heart.

8                     In the early '60s you risked your  
9           life by going to perhaps the most racist  
10          county in the entire south to uncover  
11          instances of suppression of voter rights  
12          suffered by African Americans.

13                    In the 1950's, you risked your  
14          career by being the first Philadelphia lawyer  
15          to confront the McCarthy witch hunt, by  
16          representing a Philadelphia man at the  
17          McCarthy hearings and recruiting other  
18          Philadelphia lawyers to do the same.

19                    Throughout your career in City  
20          Council, you always stood up and fought for  
21          the person or groups of citizens in need of  
22          help, in need of hope and in need of power,  
23          regardless of the political cost or the  
24          perceived likelihood of success. It is clear  
25          to me that you were driven by your heart,

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2           your love for people.

3                   I know, dad, that other than helping  
4           your family, there was nothing you loved  
5           better than helping a constituent who needed  
6           help, no matter who or what it was, whether  
7           it meant going to the police roundhouse at  
8           8th and Race Street late at night to speak  
9           for a just arrested constituent at a bail  
10          hearing, or whether it was calling the head  
11          of the Philadelphia Gas Works in the middle  
12          of the night when the constituent's gas was  
13          turned off, and then you stayed up for an  
14          hour or two to make follow-up phone calls to  
15          PGW to make sure the gas was turned on.

16                  And despite all your big issues  
17          you've worked on, nothing gave you more  
18          satisfaction -- no matter was too unimportant  
19          or too inconvenient if it mattered to someone  
20          else. Your heart was too big for anything to  
21          be too small.

22                  And I know, dad, that your illness  
23          in the last several months caused you so much  
24          pain regarding your youngest grandchild, my  
25          four-year-old son Daniel, especially given

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           the tragedy into which he was born, the  
3           passing of his mommy soon thereafter.

4                   I know that you desperately wanted  
5           to be there for him, as you have been for  
6           everyone else. Thus, when you would see him  
7           in the last several months or when I would  
8           tell you then and at the hospital that,  
9           Daniel, I love you, I would see the tears  
10          well up in your eyes.

11                   You wanted your big heart to last a  
12          little bit longer for him. But dad, your  
13          heart endured, and has as much use as anyone  
14          could have ever dreamed.

15                   You have taught your family and so  
16          many others about living from the heart. It  
17          is now up to the rest of us to carry on, and  
18          to carry out your lessons.

19                   Dad, I love you, Daniel loves you,  
20          and your whole family loves you.

21                   (Applause.)

22                   JUDGE COHEN: And finally, since I  
23          am the last speaker on behalf of the entire  
24          Cohen family, we want to thank the esteemed  
25          Council President, the esteemed 16 members of

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           City Council, the very distinguished  
3           speakers, and the distinguished guests for  
4           participating in this memorial for my father.

5                     And I want to let you all know that  
6           we're having refreshments. I understand it's  
7           in the Council caucus room.

8                     COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Very light  
9           refreshments.

10                    JUDGE COHEN: Very light  
11           refreshments. Don't expect any prime ribs.  
12           We've having very light refreshments in the  
13           Council caucus room.

14                    And the family and City Council, if  
15           I may speak for City Council for a moment,  
16           welcomes you to join us.

17                    Again, thank you very much.

18                    (Applause.)

19                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair  
20           now recognizes Susan Watts for a final  
21           musical tribute.

22                    MS. WATTS: I will sing the Yiddish  
23           song, If I Have the Strength, I Will Go Into  
24           the Streets and Proclaim Peace.

25                    (Applause.)

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen

2                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you.

3           I thank all of you for attending the service  
4           today.

5                   As Judge Cohen indicated, light  
6           refreshments will be served in the caucus  
7           room which is directly across the corridor.

8                   This concludes our session for  
9           today, with my recognizing Councilwoman Tasco  
10          for a motion to adjourn.

11                   COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Madam  
12          President, I move that we stand adjourned  
13          until Thursday, October the 20th at 10:00  
14          a.m.

15                   COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Second.

16                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: It has  
17          been moved and seconded.

18                   All in favor will please indicate by  
19          saying aye.

20                   (Chorus of "ayes.")

21                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Those  
22          opposed?

23                   (No response.)

24                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: The ayes  
25          have it, and Council will stand adjourned

1           Memorial Service - Councilman Cohen  
2           until Thursday, October 20th at 10:00 a.m.  
3                   Thank you all very much.  
4                   (Memorial service concluded at 4:20  
5           p.m.)  
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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the memorial service of The Philadelphia City Council, taken on October 17, 2005, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

---

DAVID A. DEIK, RPR and  
Commissioner of Deeds

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)