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## COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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## COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PROPERTY AND

4

## PUBLIC WORKS

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Room 400, City Hall  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Thursday, March 2, 2006  
2:35 p.m.

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## PRESENT:

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COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE, CHAIR

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COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY

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COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY

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COUNCILWOMAN JOAN L. KRAJEWSKI

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COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

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COUNCILMAN JUAN RAMOS

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COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

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BILL 050744 - An ordinance naming and  
designating the Lehigh Avenue Branch of the  
Free Library of Philadelphia located at 601  
West Lehigh Avenue as the "Lillian Marrero  
Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia."

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BILL 060087 - An ordinance authorizing and  
directing the change of the McPherson Square  
Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia,  
located at 601 E. Indiana Avenue, to "The  
Coretta Scott King Branch of the Free Library  
of Philadelphia."

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V A R A L L O Incorporated

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Litigation Support Services

Eleven Penn Center

26

1835 Market Street, Suite 600

27

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

215.561.2220 215.567.2670

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COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Good

3

afternoon. This is the Committee on

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Public Property and Public Works. We'll

5

come to order.

6

We have a quorum present. To

7

my left, we have Councilman Fran Rizzo,

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Councilman Jack Kelly. To my right, we

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have Councilman Juan Ramos, Councilwoman

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Donna Reed Miller and Councilwoman

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Krajewski.

12

Will the Clerk please read the

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title of the first bill.

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THE CLERK: Bill No. 050744, an

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ordinance naming and designating the

16

Lehigh Avenue Branch of the Free Library

17

of Philadelphia located at 601 West

18

Lehigh Avenue as the "Lillian Marrero

19

Branch of the Free Library of

20

Philadelphia."

21

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

22

Do we have anyone who wishes to

23

testify on this bill?

24

Please come forward.

25

Thank you. Please state your

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2           name for the record.

3                       MR. SHELKROT: Certainly. I'm  
4           Elliot Shelkrot. I'm President and  
5           Director of the Free Library of  
6           Philadelphia, and I am pleased to be  
7           here. I thank you, Chairman Clarke and  
8           other members of this Committee. And I  
9           am supporting the Ordinance 050744, which  
10          is to rename the Lehigh Avenue Branch of  
11          the Free Library of Philadelphia for  
12          Lillian Marrero and to make it the  
13          Lillian Marrero Branch.

14                     I'm not going to read the full  
15          testimony that I submitted.

16                     COUNCILMAN CLARKE: We'll  
17          submit it to the stenographer and it will  
18          be printed into the record.

19                     MR. SHELKROT: Okay. But I do  
20          want to summarize, if I may.

21                     COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Please do.

22                     MR. SHELKROT: Lillian Marrero  
23          joined the staff of the Library in 1991  
24          and brought a very special interest in  
25          reaching children and young people. She

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2           set up a computer lab at the branch to  
3           help residents learn how to use the  
4           Internet, helped with job searches,  
5           arranged classes of English as a second  
6           language, among many, many other  
7           programs.

8                       When the American Library  
9           Association met in Philadelphia at its  
10          convention, that branch was the specific  
11          branch that people went to to understand  
12          the commitment that Philadelphia has to  
13          libraries and to communities and to see  
14          how that commitment was translated in a  
15          Hispanic community, predominantly  
16          Hispanic community.

17                      Lillian believed in the  
18          importance of the outward appearance of  
19          the library. We do have custodial guards  
20          at our libraries and other staff, but she  
21          was often seen cleaning up outside and  
22          sweeping if the appropriate staff were  
23          sick or were unavailable.

24                      She was the key person in a  
25          \$25,000 renovation of the branch, planted

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2           a garden of azaleas and trees. Her  
3           commitment and impact prompted the  
4           Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino  
5           Affairs to confer on her one of their  
6           first Pride Awards.

7                       I will tell you also that this  
8           is the first time that the name of a  
9           librarian will be used to name a branch  
10          of the Free Library. Lillian Marrero was  
11          absolutely a model for many, many people  
12          throughout the Free Library, and when she  
13          passed away at a young age,  
14          inappropriately young age, we were all  
15          very sad, and I suspect there will be  
16          many people in the community and the  
17          staff who will appreciate this. And I  
18          know the Board of Trustees will be acting  
19          on the same thing.

20                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

21                      Yes, sir. Please state your  
22          name for the record.

23                      MR. QUALTAHANA: Mr. Chairman,  
24          members of the Committee, good afternoon.  
25          My name is William Qualtahana.

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2                       I am proud to openly support  
3           the renaming of the Lehigh Branch of the  
4           Free Library to the Lillian Marrero  
5           Branch.

6                       Back in mid 2005, I was among  
7           several vocal members of my community who  
8           urged Councilperson Mariano to consider  
9           the honor for a beloved and influential  
10          figure. She served as a beacon to our  
11          children and to our entire community.  
12          Councilperson Mariano understood the  
13          importance, as did Councilman Juan Ramos.

14                      The impact of this renaming in  
15          honor of a committed proponent of reading  
16          and higher learning will be felt by  
17          generations of bright, wonderful Latino  
18          children for our generations to come.

19                      I thank Councilperson Mariano  
20          and Ramos and this body for acting so  
21          affirmatively for education and the power  
22          of diversity.

23                      Thank you.

24                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You're  
25          welcome.

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2                       Thank you, gentlemen.

3                       Anyone else to testify on this  
4           bill?

5                       Please step to the witness  
6           table.

7                       MR. WALSH: Thank you,  
8           Councilman Clarke and distinguished  
9           Councilpeople here today. My name is  
10          Mike Walsh. I'm the President of AFSCME  
11          Local 2186, District Council 47, and it  
12          was my honor to represent Lillian when  
13          she worked as a librarian.

14                      My remarks are brief. I just  
15          want to agree wholeheartedly with the  
16          previous speaker, Mr. Shelkrot, as the  
17          Director and my distinguished colleague  
18          here at the end of the table, that we  
19          wholeheartedly support renaming the  
20          library after Lillian, and we encourage  
21          and appreciate the Council's interest in  
22          doing so.

23                      Thank you.

24                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,  
25          sir.

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2                       Anyone else to testify?

3                       Please come to the witness

4           stand.

5                       MR. RIOS: Good afternoon. My  
6           name is Hector Rios and I'm Lillian's  
7           husband, and my daughter here is with me.  
8           Her name is Tonya Rios Marrero.

9                       I'd like to thank you for the  
10          opportunity to address you and to tell a  
11          little bit of Lillian's story.

12                      I brought with me -- I did not  
13          particularly decide to bring her latest  
14          permanent employee evaluation, but  
15          somehow going through her papers, I  
16          chanced up on the latest one of the day  
17          of 1/26/05, and it just struck me that in  
18          the list of criterias for her evaluation,  
19          although she has X's along the  
20          outstanding column all throughout, and I  
21          just wanted to bring that in case -- just  
22          to establish the fact that she was  
23          consistently evaluated as an outstanding  
24          employee.

25                      I also brought a picture of her

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2           in case any one of you wanted to see what  
3           she looked like also. I have them with  
4           me. I'd be happy to share that with you.

5                       And also I wrote my comments,  
6           because I didn't want to ramble on  
7           incoherently.

8                       Once we established the fact  
9           that Lillian was an outstanding librarian  
10          and City employee, we need to consider  
11          that the outstanding category is  
12          insufficient to describe Lillian.  
13          Therefore, I would prefer to use the word  
14          "extraordinary." By this, I mean that  
15          Lillian always gave a little bit more of  
16          what was expected.

17                      Here are some examples of her  
18          extraordinary contributions to the  
19          library and the City: She endeavored to  
20          create a web of activity and supportive  
21          services to benefit library patrons. She  
22          collaborated with community agencies,  
23          such as the jail, the Lighthouse, the  
24          Police Department, Projectula (ph),  
25          Philadelphia Community College,

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2        Norristown Square Neighborhood Community  
3        Association, to name a few, in creating a  
4        web of supportive services. So this  
5        resulted in a dynamic institution that  
6        became a true lighthouse to the  
7        community.

8                    Had you had the chance to visit  
9        her library, you would have noticed that  
10       it had a special buzz to it, from  
11       creating a safe harbor and a learning  
12       place for school-age children, to  
13       providing reference services for college  
14       students at Temple and LaSalle  
15       Universities.

16                   When the National Library  
17       Association conducted their convention  
18       here in Philadelphia a few years ago,  
19       they ran a shuttle service to the Lehigh  
20       Library for national librarians to see  
21       firsthand an exemplary library that  
22       happened to serve a poor population. In  
23       gest, I used to tell Lillian that she was  
24       the new Ramonita Rodriguez of North  
25       Philadelphia. Ramonita Rodriguez was a

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2           beloved teacher, and there was a branch  
3           named after her. That is, that Lillian  
4           was a person that made an important  
5           difference in the lives of many. The  
6           Latino Business Association has  
7           recognized this fact and commissioned and  
8           computed a two-story-high mural of her  
9           portrait in the side of her house near  
10          the library. The NBC News also featured  
11          her contributions in a news story shortly  
12          after her death.

13                       Lillian was a hard-driven  
14          person that overcame many obstacles in  
15          her successful career, and she used the  
16          library to help others. She used the  
17          library as a platform to help  
18          individuals, mostly poor and limited  
19          English-proficient citizens, to improve  
20          their lives. She raised funds to develop  
21          a computer lab where patrons were able to  
22          improve upon their language, academics  
23          and job-seeking skills.

24                       In addition, she developed a  
25          collection full of books in Spanish that

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2           drew patrons from all over the City, as  
3           well as other faraway places. She also  
4           helped to develop the Spanish Books  
5           Collection for the whole library system  
6           by traveling to Mexico and Spain to buy  
7           books for the library.

8                       Lillian was known at this  
9           bigger world level, as well as the  
10          national level. As an active member of  
11          Reforma, she conducted workshops in other  
12          states on how to provide electronic and  
13          Internet-based services to the Latino  
14          population, as well as co-wrote a chapter  
15          in a book on libraries and the poor.  
16          Lillian obtained the recognitions from  
17          Governor Tom Ridge and was featured in an  
18          article in USA Today.

19                      Lillian was a stickler for  
20          details. She personally bought the  
21          detergents that were used to clean the  
22          library, because she wanted everything to  
23          smell good. When the library underwent  
24          renovations a few years back, she chose  
25          to retain and restore the old and

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2        beaten-up iron chairs because they were  
3        antiques. She raised funds by various  
4        means, including flea markets, to buy  
5        plants and shrubs for the library's front  
6        lawn. Somebody in North Philadelphia is  
7        wearing my old blue jeans.

8                She chose to employ a local  
9        handyman rather than a landscaper so as  
10       to provide employment to a local person.  
11       She would pick up trash around the  
12       building, and kept the janitor busy  
13       looking for trash on the sidewalk. By  
14       the way, she kept everybody busy.  
15       Mediocrity was not an option for her.

16               Lillian was a lover of plants.  
17       One of her favorite yearly activities was  
18       to attend the Flower Show. She sought to  
19       recreate some of these foliage in the  
20       library itself. One is impressed with  
21       the greenery inside her library.

22               Lillian and I and my daughter  
23       live in the East Falls section of  
24       Philadelphia. Lillian loved this  
25       neighborhood because of the abundance of

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2           trees. She sought to bring some of this  
3           beauty to the City at-large by  
4           volunteering her services with the  
5           Philadelphia Horticultural Society and,  
6           in particular, with the committee that  
7           worked with planting trees in the inner  
8           City.

9                       Lillian was a special person.  
10          You would be struck by her enthusiasm,  
11          warmth and wit. She was friendly,  
12          treated everybody plainly and humanely,  
13          especially the senior citizens of  
14          Projectula. For all these reasons,  
15          Lillian's work was extraordinary.

16                      Lillian was a hero, and as a  
17          hero, she died young. I don't think she  
18          will have sought or wanted a recognition  
19          or an honor such as the one proposed here  
20          today. However, the Latino population is  
21          in need of heroes and of people like  
22          Lillian who can remind us of who we are.

23                      Thank you.

24                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you  
25          for your testimony.

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2                           (Applause.)

3                           COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Let the  
4           record reflect that Councilman Kenney has  
5           joined the Committee.

6                           Anyone else to testify on the  
7           bill?

8                           Why don't you all just take a  
9           seat at the witness table and we can just  
10          have your testimony in succession.

11                          Thank you. Please state your  
12          name for the record.

13                          MS. GARCIA: My name is Ada  
14          Garcia, and my brother worked at her  
15          branch, and I used to volunteer for her  
16          once in a while. She was always doing a  
17          lot of things for her community. She was  
18          like a workaholic. So any time she  
19          needed me, I would be there for her.

20                          Thank you.

21                          COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

22                          MS. DeCARLO: I'll be very  
23          brief. My name is Patricia DeCarlo, and  
24          I met Lillian when she was at the Girard  
25          Library Branch. And she really was an

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2           extraordinary person, because it's sort  
3           of like a normal job that you have and  
4           how somebody can take a normal job and  
5           turn it into an extraordinary activity.  
6           She was always nice, pleasant, helpful,  
7           and just gave 100 percent of herself to  
8           make the library the true community space  
9           that it needs to be. Any time we needed  
10          any help from her, whether it was flyers  
11          or information and she was always coming  
12          up with ideas of what to do, and she  
13          really was an extraordinary librarian and  
14          civil servant, and I can't think of  
15          anyone who deserves the merit of having  
16          the library at Lehigh renamed in her  
17          honor than Lillian Marrero, and I thank  
18          you for your efforts.

19                   COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,  
20           Ms. DeCarlo.

21                   MS. VEGA-DeJOSEPH: Good  
22           afternoon. My name is Juanita  
23           Vega-DeJoseph, children's librarian at  
24           the Joseph E. Coleman Branch.

25                   I want to tell you about

1        3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2            Lillian Marrero, public librarian who did  
3            make a difference in her lifetime. When  
4            I started as a library trainee at the  
5            Lehigh Branch in 2000, I would privately  
6            think to myself, "She who must be  
7            obeyed."

8                    Lillian was a no-nonsense boss.  
9            She was 48 years young when she succumbed  
10           to cancer on February 14th, 2005.  
11           Lillian Marrero believed in a strong work  
12           ethic that got the job done. She was  
13           polished, professional, and she believed  
14           work validated her.

15                   Her meticulous attention to  
16           detail to her work led her to accomplish  
17           much in her time as a librarian for the  
18           Free Library of Philadelphia. She  
19           maintained active membership throughout  
20           her career as a librarian in the American  
21           Library Association and Public Library  
22           Association. These active memberships  
23           led her to participate in panel  
24           discussions about search engines and  
25           gateways that Mr. Rios had mentioned

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2            before, and I won't go into detail, but I  
3            have copies of the archives from those  
4            workshops and panel discussions that she  
5            participated in.

6                      As he mentioned, Lillian wrote  
7            a chapter in 1998 for a book titled Poor  
8            People and Library Services. Her chapter  
9            is called Access to Technology for  
10          Low-Income Groups. Just the year before  
11          this article was published in '97 she was  
12          awarded the Pride Award from the  
13          Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino  
14          Affairs.

15                     By '97, Lillian became Branch  
16          Manager for the Lehigh Branch located at  
17          6th and Lehigh, and part of her  
18          responsibilities was to maintain the  
19          Spanish Book Collection there, but also  
20          she was also called on to attend the  
21          Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico to  
22          purchase Spanish language materials for  
23          the library system, for the entire  
24          system, and two years before her death,  
25          she was one of ten, only ten, bilingual

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2           librarians selected from across the  
3           country to attend the Biannual Spanish  
4           Book Fair in Spain. On these trips,  
5           Lillian would purchase Spanish books not  
6           only for the Lehigh Branch, which has the  
7           largest holdings of Spanish titles in our  
8           system, but she purchased books for the  
9           Spanish collections for four other  
10          branches.

11                   If you want a true measure of  
12          Lillian Marrero's life and work as a  
13          librarian for the community she worked  
14          in, you can still see it. I urge you to  
15          visit the 6th and Lehigh Avenue Branch  
16          and enter the majestic building funded by  
17          Andrew Carnegie which opened the doors to  
18          the public in 1906. Take a look inside  
19          and walk around the entire floor.  
20          Lillian's desk was located to the left,  
21          surrounded by huge potted plants, which  
22          she strategically placed around the  
23          entire library space so one can breathe  
24          cleaner air.

25                   The Spanish Book Collection is

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           located on the entire left side of the  
3           floor. The computer laboratory, which  
4           Lillian founded with a grant she wrote  
5           for funding through the Knight Ridder  
6           Foundation, is there on the left side,  
7           and as you walk in the lab, you will also  
8           see the Julio DeBurgos Rare Book  
9           Collection, a collection dedicated to the  
10          rich literature of Puerto Rico. This  
11          collection is a collaboration Lillian  
12          created with a neighborhood organization  
13          recognized for its commitment to the  
14          preservation of Puerto Rican culture, the  
15          Taller Puertorrigueno. Lillian believed  
16          the success of a public institution was  
17          measured by the work done for the public.

18                 The public. She served it and  
19          gave it the best that she could right up  
20          to two months before her death. She  
21          chose to go to work, to go to 6th and  
22          Lehigh Avenue, and pull that heavy metal  
23          gate upward and start the day and provide  
24          service to strangers who walk in seeking  
25          anything and everything.

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2                       In an age where structures are  
3           given names of the highest bidder or  
4           contributor, here is an opportunity for  
5           Philadelphia to rise to a level of grace  
6           and name a library after someone who  
7           worked for it, cleaned it, beautified it,  
8           filled it with a purpose for the  
9           community it stands in. Rename the  
10          Lehigh Branch after an employee, a  
11          librarian, a civil servant to our  
12          community. The Lillian Marrero Memorial  
13          Library. What's in a name, Shakespeare  
14          said? Your ability to honor Lillian and  
15          all the civil servants in the City of  
16          Philadelphia.

17                      Thank you.

18                      (Applause.)

19                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you  
20          for your testimony.

21                      Anyone else who wishes to  
22          testify on this particular bill?

23                      (No response.)

24                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There being  
25          none, we will now go into the public

1        3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.  
2        meeting for purposes of voting this bill  
3        out.

4                    Councilman Kelly, can I please  
5        ask for a motion on Bill No. 050744?

6                    COUNCILMAN KELLY: Yes.  
7        Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill No. 050744  
8        be reported out of this Committee with a  
9        favorable recommendation.

10                   (Duly seconded.)

11                   COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Bill  
12        050744, motioned and seconded, will be  
13        reported out of this Committee with a  
14        favorable recommendation. Thank you very  
15        much.

16                   All in favor?

17                   (Aye.)

18                   COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Any  
19        opposed?

20                   (No response.)

21                   COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The ayes  
22        have it. Bill 050744 is reported out of  
23        this Committee with a favorable  
24        recommendation.

25                   We will now go back into the

1        3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.  
2        public hearing.

3                Will the Clerk please read the  
4        title of the next bill.

5                (Applause.)

6                THE CLERK: Bill No. 060087, an  
7        ordinance authorizing and directing the  
8        change of the McPherson Square Branch of  
9        the Free Library of Philadelphia, located  
10       at 601 East Indiana Avenue, to the  
11       Coretta Scott King Branch of the Free  
12       Library of Philadelphia.

13               COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Is there  
14       anyone to testify on this bill?

15               We have a witness list that I  
16       have been given. It says Mark Segal,  
17       Linda Rhyme from DC 47, Mr. Shelkrot and  
18       Mr. Matthews. Why don't both of you come  
19       to the witness table, the union  
20       contingent.

21               Gentlemen, please state your  
22       name for the record and please proceed.

23               MR. MATTHEWS: Pete Matthews,  
24       President, District Council 33.

25               MR. WALSH: Mike Walsh on

1       3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.  
2       behalf on Tom Cronin, District Council  
3       47.

4                   COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I'm sorry.  
5       Please proceed.

6                   MR. MATTHEWS: Members of City  
7       Council, my name is Pete Matthews, as I  
8       just said, President of AFSCME District  
9       Council 33, and I want to thank you for  
10      the opportunity to speak on behalf of our  
11      union. I'm honored to be here today to  
12      testify in favor of naming the library on  
13      McPherson Square after Coretta Scott  
14      King.

15                   Naming this library branch  
16      after Coretta Scott King is a fitting  
17      tribute to her because her support for  
18      education for all people of races was an  
19      important part of the legacy she forged  
20      for herself after her husband, Dr. Martin  
21      Luther King, was assassinated in 1968.

22                   The dedication of this library  
23      in her honor holds a special place in the  
24      hearts of all AFSCME members because her  
25      life was linked to the life of our union

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2           in so many ways.

3                     I would like to tell all of you  
4           here today why we in AFSCME feel so  
5           strongly about her and why we appreciate  
6           the work that Councilman Mariano has done  
7           to make the proposal before you here  
8           possible.

9                     Coretta Scott King first became  
10          known to many AFSCME members as the wife  
11          of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King,  
12          Jr. After his assassination in 1968, she  
13          was identified then as his widow, as well  
14          as an outstanding advocate of his vision  
15          of racial peace and non-violent social  
16          change. She was a strong woman whose  
17          grace and dignity held up the image of  
18          her husband as a man of peace, of racial  
19          justice, of fairness.

20                    In 1953, Coretta Scott married  
21          Dr. King, then a young minister of a  
22          prominent Atlanta family, beginning a  
23          remarkable partnership that ended with  
24          Dr. King's assassination on April 4,  
25          1968.

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2                       Mrs. King picked up his mission  
3           even before her husband was buried by  
4           marching at the head of the striking  
5           garbage workers he had come to Memphis to  
6           champion. These workers were AFSCME  
7           members that Dr. King had come to support  
8           in the struggle for justice. The Memphis  
9           garbage strike forever linked Dr. King  
10          and Coretta Scott King with AFSCME.

11                     Mrs. King went on to lead the  
12          effort for a national holiday in  
13          Dr. King's honor. The national holiday  
14          was approved by United States Congress in  
15          1983, and that was reluctantly signed  
16          into law by President Ronald Reagan, who  
17          had opposed the legislation creating the  
18          holiday, saying it was too expensive and  
19          inappropriate. In spite of this  
20          reluctance on the part of conservatives  
21          in the federal government, the holiday  
22          was first observed on January 20th, 1986.

23                     Due to the leadership and  
24          dedication shown by Coretta Scott King,  
25          Dr. King's holiday has been observed on

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           the third Monday of January ever since.

3                       Mrs. King then went on to found  
4           the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for  
5           Non-Violent Social Change in Atlanta,  
6           dedicated to both scholarship and  
7           activism.

8                       In speaking engagements during  
9           the short time after his death, Mrs. King  
10          at first used his own words as much as  
11          possible, as her goals were simply to  
12          maintain his presence, but soon she  
13          developed her own language and her own  
14          causes.

15                      When she spoke of her husband's  
16          place at the Poor People's Campaign at  
17          the Lincoln Memorial on June 19th, 1968,  
18          she talked not just of his vision but  
19          also of hers. She spoke of gender and  
20          economic status, as well as race. She  
21          called upon American women to unite and  
22          form a solid block of women political  
23          power to fight the three great evils of  
24          racism, poverty and war.

25                      She joined the Board of

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           Directors of the National Organization  
3           for Women and the Southern Christian  
4           Leadership Conference, and she became  
5           widely identified with a broad array of  
6           international human rights issues rather  
7           than focusing primarily on race.

8                       She believed that the broad  
9           view of civil rights and human rights as  
10          being one and the same was completely in  
11          keeping with Dr. King's vision.

12                     Mrs. King was a woman who  
13          overcame tragedy, held her family  
14          together, and became an inspirational  
15          presence around the world.

16                     Her journeys through the rest  
17          of her life, with all of its struggles,  
18          is very similar to the struggles that so  
19          many working families in the  
20          neighborhoods around McPherson Square  
21          continue to face even today.

22                     Those who knew her best said  
23          Coretta Scott King bore a special burden,  
24          carrying on her husband's work and  
25          teachings, with a sense of spirit and

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2        purpose that made her more than a symbol.

3        She was not only viewed as the wife of a  
4        martyr of the Civil Rights Movement, but  
5        as a leader and a symbol in her own right  
6        as a result of her own actions.

7                The fact that we are proposing  
8        to recognize her here today for what she  
9        has accomplished on her own is a fitting  
10       tribute not only to the legacy she upheld  
11       but the life she led on her own.

12               The proposal you are  
13       considering here today should also be  
14       seen as a tribute and an honor for the  
15       neighborhoods around the library in  
16       McPherson Square, because it was to  
17       helping exactly these kinds of racially  
18       diverse and economically struggling  
19       communities that Coretta Scott King  
20       devoted the rest of her life.

21               Coretta Scott King richly  
22       deserves the honor we are proposing to  
23       bestow on her today, and I would again  
24       like to thank Councilman Mariano and  
25       everyone else who had a hand in making

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           this happen on behalf of the members of  
3           and retirees of AFSCME District Council  
4           33 who hold Coretta Scott King in the  
5           highest regard.

6                       Thank you.

7                       COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you  
8           for your testimony.

9                       Please proceed.

10                      MR. WALSH: Thank you,  
11           Councilman Clarke and distinguished  
12           members of City Council, for allowing me  
13           this opportunity to speak on behalf and  
14           support of the bill before us.

15                      The members of AFSCME  
16           District --

17                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Sir, state  
18           your name for the record, please.

19                      MR. WALSH: I'm sorry. My name  
20           is Mike Walsh. I'm President of AFSCME  
21           Local 2186, District Council 47.

22                      The members of AFSCME District  
23           Council 47 are in wholehearted support of  
24           the renaming of the McPherson Square  
25           Branch Library to the Coretta Scott King

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           Library.

3                       As we know, Mrs. King believed  
4           that education and learning would  
5           increase equality and create  
6           opportunities for people of all colors.

7                       She was an example of the quiet  
8           power that is represented by a library.  
9           Within the walls of this building are  
10          resources which can expand the minds of  
11          all those who enter. The trained  
12          librarians and staff can help both old  
13          and young to better understand the world  
14          around them and to be better prepared to  
15          deal with the possibilities and problems  
16          that are part of the 21st century.

17                      AFSCME District Council 47 also  
18          believes that this renaming will remind  
19          people that Mrs. King's husband,  
20          Dr. Martin Luther King, was killed in  
21          Memphis, Tennessee as he supported a  
22          strike by sanitation workers. Dr. King  
23          understood that working men and women  
24          deserved safe working conditions and the  
25          respect of the public whom they served.

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2                       It is with a great deal of  
3           pride that AFSCME District Council 47  
4           stands in support of this bill and looks  
5           forward to the renaming of this library.

6                       Thank you very much.

7                       COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.  
8           Thank you for your testimony.

9                       Anyone else to testify on this  
10          bill?

11                      Good afternoon.

12                      MS. PALMER: Good afternoon.

13          My name is Kristina D. Palmer, Director  
14          of Development for the African-American  
15          Museum in Philadelphia.

16                      The African-American Museum in  
17          Philadelphia's mission is dedicated to  
18          collecting, preserving and interpreting  
19          the material and intellectual culture of  
20          African-Americans in Philadelphia, the  
21          Delaware Valley, the Commonwealth of  
22          Pennsylvania and the Americas. The  
23          African-American Museum in Philadelphia  
24          not only acknowledges Coretta Scott King  
25          as a civil rights leader, but also as an

1        3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2        artist who used her talents to engage the  
3        movement.

4                    During her lifetime, Mrs. King  
5        authored three books and was recognized  
6        by the American Library Association in  
7        1969 with the establishment of an award  
8        in her name honoring her courage and  
9        determination to continue to work for  
10       peace and world brotherhood. This award  
11       is presented annually to an  
12       African-American author and to an  
13       African-American illustrator for  
14       outstandingly inspirational and  
15       educational contributions published the  
16       previous year. Some of the artists who  
17       have illustrations and have received this  
18       award and whose works have been exhibited  
19       at the Museum are Michele Wood, Tom  
20       Feelings, John Steptoe and Faith  
21       Ringgold.

22                   The mission of the Free Library  
23       of Philadelphia is to provide to all  
24       segments of Philadelphia's diverse  
25       population a comprehensive collection of

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           recorded knowledge, ideas, artistic  
3           expression, and information in a variety  
4           of media, including current technology,  
5           to assure ease of access to these  
6           materials and to provide programs to  
7           stimulate the awareness of the use of  
8           these resources.

9                     The parallel missions between  
10          Mrs. King's life and legacy, the  
11          African-American Museum in Philadelphia  
12          and the Free Library of Philadelphia is  
13          to create opportunities for all people.  
14          Coretta Scott King embodied and lived the  
15          goals of the Civil Rights Movement, and  
16          her name can and does invoke a sense of  
17          pride and responsibility within us.

18                    The Philadelphia Martin Luther  
19          King, Jr. Association for Non-Violent  
20          Change is the first and only affiliate in  
21          the United States to be commissioned by  
22          Mrs. King. This City held a special  
23          place in her heart, not just because it  
24          was the home of her dear friend, C.  
25          Delores Tucker, the founder of the

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           Association, but because our diversity  
3           and rich history reflected hers.

4                       The African-American Museum in  
5           Philadelphia is a strong advocate for the  
6           renaming of the McPherson Square Park  
7           Branch of the Free Library of  
8           Philadelphia to the Coretta Scott King  
9           Branch, and thanks to Councilman Mariano  
10          for his efforts. This action will uphold  
11          not only the legacy of Mrs. King, but the  
12          values that have become synonymous with  
13          the Museum, the Library and the City.

14                      Thank you.

15                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you  
16          for your testimony.

17                      Councilman Kenney.

18                      COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I don't  
19          want to ask a question specifically of  
20          the witness, but I read in the paper some  
21          of the issues surrounding this  
22          discussion.

23                      My recollection of the area is,  
24          McPherson Square is actually a public  
25          square in the City, and the Library is a

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           facility in the square. Does the Coretta  
3           Scott King Library at McPherson Square  
4           make any sense? I mean, to me it does.  
5           It doesn't remove the name of McPherson  
6           and the great work that he did as a  
7           soldier, but it also, I guess, brings a  
8           new evolution to the area by naming the  
9           library after someone so great and a  
10          recent contributor to her history in a  
11          park that memorializes the past  
12          contributor to our history. I mean, I  
13          don't really see a problem with it.

14                        I understand the concerns that  
15          people have about perhaps changing the  
16          name, but if it's the Coretta Scott King  
17          Library at McPherson Square, to me it  
18          seems quite fair to everybody.

19                       COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Councilman,  
20          I had not read the news accounts, but I  
21          received some information via fax and  
22          actually handed out in the hallway about  
23          potential conflict as it relates to the  
24          naming. And I'm not personally familiar  
25          with the location, so I'm personally not

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           the one to be able to answer that  
3           question on any level of detail.

4                       I had some conversations with  
5           the sponsor of the bill and the staff  
6           members, and our thought was that we  
7           would probably recess the hearing today  
8           leaving the bill in the Committee,  
9           recessing to the call of the Chair so we  
10          can obviously quickly take up this action  
11          in the foreseeable future without holding  
12          the bill or without having had the bill  
13          introduced again at another time.

14                      I'm kind of surprised, frankly  
15          speaking, that the individuals who had  
16          expressed some concerns about the naming  
17          are apparently not here today. That  
18          leaves me a little --

19                      COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I think  
20          part of the news account framed the issue  
21          as if the McPherson name was being  
22          eliminated in replacement of Mrs. King.  
23          But I think Mrs. King's name on the  
24          library at McPherson Square serves both  
25          elements of history, both our modern

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           history and our past. And I guess if the  
3           name was given to the library, the sign  
4           on the library could say the Coretta  
5           Scott King Library at McPherson Square.

6                       COUNCILMAN CLARKE:

7           Personally --

8                       COUNCILMAN KENNEY: It just  
9           seems like it fits.

10                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I  
11           personally don't have a problem, but we  
12           have this District Councilperson issue.

13                      COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I  
14           understand.

15                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So I think  
16           the Councilman wanted to have further  
17           discussion with those individuals in his  
18           district that had expressed some issues.  
19           But I'm assuming that that can be  
20           resolved, particularly given the fact  
21           that you brought it to us today.

22                      COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

23                      COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,  
24           Councilman.

25                      Mr. Shelkrot, you want to

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           testify again? I know in your earlier  
3           testimony you did reference your support  
4           for this particular bill also.

5                       MR. SHELKROT: I did, but I did  
6           not realize that they were -- I just  
7           wanted, if I may.

8                       COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Please feel  
9           free.

10                      MR. SHELKROT: I'm Elliot  
11           Shelkrot, the President of the Free  
12           Library of Philadelphia.

13                      And, yes, it is true, in my  
14           written testimony I mentioned our support  
15           for both, but I just want to make sure,  
16           for those of you who don't get a copy or  
17           may not have an opportunity to read the  
18           written support, that I also support the  
19           renaming of the branch for Coretta Scott  
20           King.

21                      What a wonderful woman, and her  
22           mission and her role is certainly, as was  
23           mentioned before, the mission and the  
24           role of the Free Library. So we are  
25           happy to have that.

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2                   COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

3                   Councilman Kelly.

4                   COUNCILMAN KELLY: Yes.

5           Mr. Shelkrot, what is the name, the  
6           present name, of the library right now?

7                   MR. SHELKROT: The present name  
8           is the McPherson --

9                   COUNCILMAN KELLY: It is  
10          McPherson?

11                  MR. SHELKROT: McPherson -- I  
12          believe it's McPherson Square Branch of  
13          the Free Library of Philadelphia, and as  
14          was indicated before, it was located  
15          right in the middle of McPherson Square  
16          Park, which is a park.

17                  COUNCILMAN KELLY: Yes. It's  
18          about a block long. Yes. I am very  
19          familiar with it.

20                  Okay. That's all I wanted to  
21          know, is just the square is named after  
22          McPherson and also the library.

23                  MR. SHELKROT: That's correct.

24                  COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you.

25                  COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           Councilman Kelly.

3                   Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller.

4                   COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes.

5           Mr. Shelkrot?

6                   MR. SHELKROT: I'm sorry.

7                   COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You

8           volunteered to come up.

9                   MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

10                  COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Is there

11           anything else besides the library that

12           sits within that square? Like is there a

13           playground? Is it a park?

14                  MR. SHELKROT: Yeah, there is a

15           playground. There's a statue. But I

16           believe --

17                  COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: It says a

18           park actually?

19                  MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

20                  COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Because

21           some of us, you know, are not familiar

22           with every corner and nook and cranny of

23           Philadelphia.

24                  MR. SHELKROT: I understand.

25                  COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           why we have at-large members. Thank you.

3                       But I guess I kind of agree.

4           I'm not familiar with all the issues, but

5           I do agree with what Councilman Kenney

6           said, that it seems as if it can serve

7           both purposes. We're not changing the

8           name of the square. The square can still

9           be McPherson Square, and the Coretta

10          Scott King Library that sits within

11          McPherson Square.

12                       Didn't you say Coretta Scott

13          King Library at McPherson Square?

14                       COUNCILMAN KENNEY: It sounds

15          quite nice, doesn't it?

16                       COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: It does.

17          Okay.

18                       Thank you.

19                       COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,

20          Councilwoman.

21                       Anyone else here to testify on

22          this particular bill?

23                       (No response.)

24                       COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There being

25          none, we will now recess the Committee on

1           3/2/06 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 050744, ETC.

2           Public Property and Public Works to the  
3           call of the Chair.

4                       Thank you all very much for  
5           your testimony today.

6                       (Committee on Public Property  
7           and Public Works adjourned at 3:20 p.m.)

8                               - - -

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the  
proceedings, evidence and objections are  
contained fully and accurately in the  
stenographic notes taken by me upon the  
foregoing matter on March 2, 2006, and that  
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

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MICHELE L. MURPHY  
RPR-Notary Public

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