



MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisor Sequanna Taylor – District 5

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Committee on Intergovernmental Relations Advances Proposal to Recognize February 18 as Vel Phillips Day

MILWAUKEE - Today, the Milwaukee County Board's Committee on Intergovernmental Relations unanimously voted to advance a [resolution](#) authored by Supervisor Sequanna Taylor recognizing February 18 as Vel Phillips Day in Milwaukee County. The resolution honors the life, legacy, and trailblazing leadership of The Honorable Vel Phillips. Supervisor Taylor issued the following statement:

“Velvlea ‘Vel’ Phillips was a force for justice and a champion for civil rights whose legacy continues to shape Milwaukee County. She was the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Wisconsin Law School before continuing to break barriers as the first woman and African American elected to the Milwaukee Common Council, the first female judge in Milwaukee County, the first Black judge in Wisconsin, and the first Black person elected statewide as Secretary of State. ‘Vel Phillips’ unwavering commitment to racial equity, non-violent advocacy, and public service is not just a part of our past—it’s a guidepost for our future,” said Supervisor Taylor. “Her legacy deserves to be celebrated, honored and taught every year. This resolution is a small but powerful way Milwaukee County can uplift the work she started and continue fighting for fairness, justice, and opportunity.”

Throughout her life, Phillips fought for fair housing, civil rights, and youth justice. She introduced the landmark Phillips Housing Ordinance in 1962 to address housing discrimination and remained active in her community into her 90s, inspiring generations of Milwaukeeans with her service and vision.

Milwaukee County already honors Phillips with the Vel R. Phillips Juvenile Justice Center, a downtown greenspace in her name, and Vel R. Phillips Avenue, which stretches from Bronzeville to downtown Milwaukee. The newly recognized Vel Phillips Day will be observed annually on February 18, her birthday, to celebrate her transformative impact on Milwaukee County.

The full County Board will consider the resolution later this month.

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