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Oakland City Attorney's Office

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

Resolution No. 82369 C.M.S.

Introduced by Councilmember Larry Reid

Recognizing and Honoring The Life of Evelio Grillo, Sr.

Whereas, Mr. Evelio Grillo, Sr., was born in Ybor City, Florida on June 14, 1919, and his parents were immigrants from Cuba, while his book, Black Cuban, Black American – A Memoir, eloquently tells his story of growing up and becoming a leader in the civil rights and justice movements of the 20th Century, moved to Washington, D.C. to complete high school at Dunbar High School in Washington D.C. and was mentored by Dr. Howard Thurman, and his wife, Mrs. Sue Thurman, with whom he remained close friends for the rest of their lives, and;

Whereas, Mr. Evelio Grillo, Sr., attended college at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana on a four year scholarship, joined the Army and served in India, where he was instrumental in building the Ledo Road with the 823Rd Battalion, a segregated black battalion, and shortly before his death, was recognized on national television as one of the few remaining veterans who built Ledo Road, and studied Latin American History, as a graduate student at Columbia University, and, while in New York, joined the American Negro Theater and was paired with Ruby Dee on several radio stations, and to his credit had Eleanor Roosevelt watch him perform at the Theater and;

Whereas, Mr. Evelio Grillo, Sr., moved to California in 1949, and took a position with the City of Oakland's Recreation Department as the Director of the Alexander Community Center in West Oakland, and began his long-term involvement in the political development and success of African Americans and Latinos in Oakland, Alameda County and the State of California, and was awarded a John Hay Whitney Fellowship as a result of his work at the Alexander Community Center and was able to attend and receive his MSW from the University of California in 1953, and after working for a couple of years as a social group worker in the Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall returned to the Oakland Recreation Department as its Community Relations Consultant where he created the Associated Agencies of Oakland, which brought together seven major government institutions involved with the City's youth and families, and;

Whereas, Mr. Evelio Grillo, Sr., headed the expansion and success of the Associated Agencies, which led to Evelio becoming its coordinator and becoming the first African American to be employed by the City Manager's office, and as a result, was appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown to the California Commission on Metropolitan Area Problems, which led to Paul Ylvisaker's, a Vice –President of The Ford Foundation, an invitation to Evelio to become a member of the Great Cities Commission of the Ford Foundation, and as a result of Evelio's keen insight, Oakland was chosen in 1961 as one of the Ford Foundation's

“Great Cities” Grantees and was awarded \$2 million for a program of community development, which also led to the proposal to the Ford Foundation as a collaborative proposal by thirteen agencies of the City, the County, the State, the Urban League and the Community Welfare Council., that created “The Great Cities” program , and evolved into the Federal Economic Opportunity Act or the “War on Poverty” and the Model Cities Program.

Whereas, Mr. Evelio Grillo, Sr., took an active role in the political enfranchisement of African Americans, putting his experience and education behind Assemblyman William Byron Rumford, the first African American elected to office in Northern CA, and only the second elected in the entire State, and as his field representative, the great D.G. Gibson, became one of the foremost leaders of the State Democratic Party, and made Evelio his assistant, who worked by his side for 17 years, while his efforts contributed greatly to the election of the Honorable Lionel Wilson, the first African American Mayor of Oakland, and In 1964 was appointed by Senator Alan Cranston to the prestigious and powerful position of Inheritance Tax Referee in the State of California and was reappointed by Gray Davis around 1983, and returned to Washington, D.C., with the election of President Jimmy Carter in 1977, and as the Executive Assistant for Policy Development in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Human Development Services, served in the administration of one of his protégés, Arabella Martinez, and;

Whereas, Mr. Evelio Grillo, Sr., upon his return to Oakland, continued to be a prominent consultant to the political establishment and the City of Oakland, including former Mayor Elihu Harris, and throughout his life founded, served in leadership positions, and was an active member in many organizations including the Oakland NAACP, the Oakland Men of Tomorrow, the Bay Area Black United Fund, a founder of the Negro Political Action Association of California, and was married to Catherine Grillo and had four accomplished children: Elisha Grillo Clay, Trina Grillo, the Honorable Evelio Grillo, Jr., and Antonio (Tony) Grillo, and leaves a legacy of accomplishment and leadership which is remarkable in its depth and breath, and was an institution builder without parallel, so be it;

RESOLVED: That the City Council hereby recognizes the life and accomplishments of Mr. Evelio Grillo, Sr. and on behalf of the citizens of Oakland pays homage to his life with the City of Oakland.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, November 3, 2009 NOV 3 2009

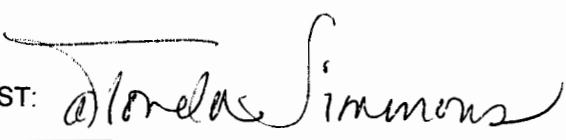
PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:
AYES - BROOKS, ~~DE LA FUENTE~~, KAPLAN, KERNIGHAN, NADEL, QUAN, REID, AND
PRESIDENT BRUNNER - 7

NOES - 0

ABSENT - 0

ABSTENTION - 0

Excused - De la Fuente - 1

ATTEST: 
LATONDA SIMMONS
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of
the City of Oakland, California