



City of Columbus

Office of City Clerk
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Legislation Text

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To Congratulate Mr. Willie O'Ree on the 50th Anniversary of his Debut in the National Hockey League.

WHEREAS, Mr. Willie O'Ree made hockey history on January 18, 1958, becoming the first black player to suit up for a National Hockey League (NHL) game, making his debut with the Boston Bruins; and

WHEREAS, this year the league celebrates the 50th anniversary of his historic debut-an extraordinary event that paved the way for future players of diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Mr. O'Ree has served as the National Hockey League's Director of Youth Development and hockey ambassador for NHL Diversity since January 1998 and has worked to expose more than 40,000 boys and girls of diverse backgrounds to unique hockey experiences, and has helped to establish 39 local grassroots hockey programs, all geared towards serving economically disadvantaged youth; and

WHEREAS, Mr. O'Ree was 95% blind in his right eye after being hit by an errant puck two years prior to his debut and his message of perseverance, education, and following your dreams is an example and an inspiration to children all over the country; and

WHEREAS, Mr. O'Ree has been recognized by the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame, has received the Lester Patrick Award for outstanding service to hockey in the United States, and most recently became the inaugural recipient of the Bill Walsh Champion of Change Award; and

WHEREAS, ~~Mr. O'Ree will be coming to Columbus to commemorate his work and recognize this milestone, celebrating the diversity of the game and the Hockey is for Everyone initiative~~ **The City of Columbus will join the Columbus Blue Jackets to commemorate his work and this milestone in celebrating the diversity of the National Hockey League;** now, therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

That the Columbus City Council ~~celebrates~~ **congratulates** Mr. Willie O'Ree ~~and on~~ his contributions to the National Hockey League.