

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

22-377

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 18, 2018

To recognize DC Black Repertory Company founder Robert Hooks and congratulate the DC Black Repertory Company on the occasion of its 47th anniversary.

WHEREAS, Robert “Bobby Dean” Hooks was born April 18, 1937, the youngest of 5 children of District of Columbia residents Edward Hooks and Bertha Ward Hooks;

WHEREAS, Robert Hooks grew up in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood and attended District of Columbia public schools: Stevens Elementary, Francis Junior High, and Armstrong High School;

WHEREAS, following his father’s death, Robert Hooks and his siblings relocated with their mother and stepfather to Philadelphia, where Bobby joined the drama club at West Philadelphia High, and honed his stagecraft in euro-classical works by such playwrights as William Shakespeare and Samuel Beckett; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, Robert Hooks moved to New York City to become a professional actor and that same year he debuted as Bobby Dean Hooks in a touring production of *Raisin in the Sun*;

WHEREAS, in 1960, Robert Hooks made his Broadway debut in *Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright*, and became well known for his role as Clay in LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman* in 1964.

WHEREAS, in 1964, Robert Hooks formed the Group Theater Workshop, offering training in the arts to underprivileged youth;

WHEREAS, in 1967, Robert Hooks founded The Negro Ensemble Company with Douglas Turner Ward and Gerald Krone, which gave birth to the modern Black theater movement and spawned the careers of many notable playwrights, actors, technical staff, directors, and others;

**ENROLLED ORIGINAL**

WHEREAS, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, childhood friend and legendary broadcaster Ralph “Petey” Greene convinced Robert Hooks to return to the District of Columbia and bring the healing power of Black theatre to the troubled streets of Washington, D.C., which resulted in the creation of the DC Black Repertory Company;

WHEREAS, the DC Black Repertory Company, better known as “The Rep”, started in a humble warehouse space in Ward 1 donated by famed restaurateur and Harambee House Hotel owner/developer Ed Murphy, while Hooks’ brother James Hooks, an architect, transformed the retired Colony movie theatre building in Ward 4 for its use;

WHEREAS, the theater enhanced the arts and cultural exposure of hundreds of young and gifted Black men and women trained there, as well as the thousands of District residents who experienced Black plays, dance, poetry, and music from the audience;

WHEREAS, for more than 40 years, Robert Hooks has enjoyed a successful and celebrated career as an actor, producer, and director that includes over 100 roles in films and television;

WHEREAS, Robert Hooks was nominated for a Tony award for his lead role in the musical, *Hallelujah, Baby!*; received both the Pioneer Award and the NAACP Image Award for Lifetime Achievement, has been inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, and won an Emmy award for his PBS special *Voices of Our People*;

WHEREAS, the DC Black Repertory Company left an indelible mark on the performing arts community in the District of Columbia and its legacy continues to thrive; and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2018, at the historic Lincoln Theater on U Street, the DC Black Repertory Company will celebrate its 47th anniversary, commemorate Robert Hooks’ distinguished acting career, and honor the founding members of the DC Black Repertory Company.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “DC Black Repertory Company 47th Anniversary Recognition Resolution of 2018”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and congratulates Robert Hooks and the DC Black Repertory Company on the occasion of its 47th anniversary.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.