

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-246

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

June 11, 2024

To recognize, honor, and celebrate the late John S. “Jack” Koczela for his outstanding work and public service.

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela was a lifelong District of Columbia and longtime Palisades resident, and a graduate of Wilson High School, now Jackson-Reed High School, where his mother ran the book room and was a substitute teacher, he was quarterback, and led a group providing tutoring to elementary school students across the city and while a student there met his lifelong love and partner in community activism Julie Balkam Koczela;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela was a tireless advocate for the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela earned his BA in History from American University, as a student he worked as the head of a new office of Word Processing and then immediately after graduation to serve as Executive Director of Admissions, Financial Aid and Veteran’s Affairs;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela served as Senior Vice President to the National Housing Partnership, one of the largest providers of low- and moderate-income housing in the nation;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela went on to work in the asset management and financial services industry in the United States and Denmark, closing what were at the time the two largest multi-property real estate transactions in Scandinavian history;

WHEREAS, while pursuing his active career and in his retirement, Mr. Koczela was a passionate and effective advocate on behalf of all of the residents of District of Columbia as well as specifically for the communities in which he resided over the years, prominent among them, McLean Gardens and Palisades;

WHEREAS, in 1979, Mr. Koczela served as Chairman of the McLean Gardens Residents Association, worked with neighbors, including Phil Mendelson, to complete one of the earliest and largest at the time tenant purchase of a rental property – the \$25 million purchase of McLean Gardens;

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WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela was appointed in 2002 by Mayor Anthony Williams, and later appointed by Mayors Adrian Fenty, Vincent C. Gray, and Muriel Bowser to the District of Columbia's Recreational Trail Advisory Committee;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela also chaired the Capital Trails Coalition, an organization with the goal of achieving a world-class network of multi-use trails with equity at its center within the Washington metropolitan area;

WHEREAS, in the fall of 2002, Mr. Koczela founded Prop 100, an organization dedicated to rebuilding and modernizing District of Columbia public schools and was a fierce advocate for school modernizations across the District, eventually playing an important role in ushering the District's massive investment in school modernizations;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela led efforts to secure increased autonomy and a pathbreaking modernization of his alma mater Wilson High School, now Jackson-Reed High School;

WHEREAS, in 2008 Mr. Koczela co-founded DC Batter Up!, a non-profit organization that promotes youth baseball and softball in the District, and provides scholarships each spring to student athletes who require financial assistance to attend college;

WHEREAS, in 2019 the organization renamed the scholarship the DC Batter Up! Jack Koczela scholarship, in a show of characteristic community spirit, after his passing, the family urged people wishing to honor Jack's life to contribute to the scholarship fund;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela's deep commitment to youth sports led him to be a forceful advocate for the creation of State Championship Tournaments in the District of Columbia with the baseball championship finals initially played at National's Park;

WHEREAS, in 2000, Mr. Koczela created the Vincent E. Reed Award for Excellence in Teaching at his alma mater, Wilson High School, now Jackson-Reed High School, named after the Principal at the time he was a student there and who went on to be the first Black Superintendent of DCPS;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela was an early advocate to rename Wilson High School after Mr. Reed given Woodrow Wilson's record of treatment of African Americans in the District of Columbia and Mr. Reed's accomplishments;

WHEREAS, the school was eventually renamed Jackson-Reed in honor of Edna Jackson, an African American teacher at the school, and Mr. Reed;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela was a mentor and friend to many advocates in the District of Columbia, including Ward 3 Councilmember Matt Frumin and Chairman Phil Mendelson;

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela passed away on November 8, 2022;

WHEREAS, Mr. Koczela is survived by his wife Julie, their children, Luke and Tracy, and their spouses, grandson Will, 5 siblings, and dozens of nieces and nephews.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “John S. “Jack” Koczela Posthumous Recognition Resolution of 2024”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes, honors, and celebrates John S. “Jack” Koczela for his considerable contributions and activism throughout the District.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.