

2007 Senate Resolution 17

ENGROSSED RESOLUTION

Relating to: commending the public service of Velvlea Rogers Phillips.

Whereas, Velvlea “Vel” Rogers Phillips was born on February 18, 1924, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and

Whereas, Vel Phillips, who after winning a national scholarship to attend Howard University, in Washington, D.C., returned to Wisconsin to complete her law degree and became the first African–American woman to graduate from the University of Wisconsin–Madison Law school; and

Whereas, in 1953, Phillips ran for a seat on the school board of the Milwaukee Public Schools, and was the first African–American candidate to make it past the non–partisan, citywide primary election; and

Whereas, in 1956, she became the first woman and the first African–American member of the common council in Milwaukee; and

Whereas, Vel Phillips was appointed to the Milwaukee County judiciary, the first woman judge in Milwaukee and the first African–American judge in Wisconsin; and

Whereas, in 1978, Vel Phillips was the first woman and first nonwhite elected secretary of state in Wisconsin, and during the absence of both the governor and lieutenant governor, under Wisconsin law, she briefly served as acting governor; and

Whereas, in 2002 Vel Phillips was awarded a distinguished professor chair at Marquette Law School; and

Whereas, Vel Phillips was the highest–ranking woman to win state office in Wisconsin in the twentieth century; and

Whereas, the adoption of this senate resolution is supported not only by the senate, but also by members of the assembly, including specifically Representatives Sheridan, Schneider, Young, Grigsby, Sinicki, Mason, Fields, Benedict, Turner, Kessler, and Hintz; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, That the members of the Wisconsin senate honor the remarkable life and achievements of Vel Phillips, both in the political sphere and in the various communities in which she dedicated herself to improving the quality of life for all.

State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin

Senator Fred A. Risser
President of the Senate

Date

Robert J. Marchant
Senate Chief Clerk