

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 364

Approved September 5, 2025

WHEREAS, Mattie L. Smith was born on June 4, 1933, in Spartanburg, South Carolina, the daughter of Dock and Rena Wright; and

WHEREAS, Mattie passed away on June 12, 2023, leaving behind a powerful legacy of community service and activism; and

WHEREAS, In the 1960s, Mattie moved to Providence, Rhode Island, seeking a better life for her six children, and in doing so, began an enduring commitment to transformative community work; and

WHEREAS, Mattie worked as a cosmetologist and a nurse before turning her focus to activism, joining WAGE (Worker's Association for Guaranteed Employment) in the early 1980s, where she helped confront the crises of poverty and housing instability faced by many in the inner city; and

WHEREAS, Mattie went on to co-found DARE (Direct Action for Rights and Equality) at her kitchen table, where she and her neighbors launched campaigns to improve their neighborhoods and uplift their children, including leading a march to City Hall that sparked citywide investment in safe playgrounds and even led to a tennis court being built in South Providence; and

WHEREAS, Her unwavering efforts earned her the Jefferson Award for community service, a place in the Martin Luther King Jr. Hall of Fame, and a proclamation from Mayor Buddy Cianci naming May 22nd as Mattie L. Smith Day in the City of Providence; and

WHEREAS, Mattie was a beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and matriarch whose legacy continues through her children, grandchildren, and generations to come, as well as through every neighborhood she touched with her vision and her voice.

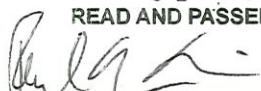

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council hereby establishes the honorary designation of Glenham Street as *Miss Mattie L. Smith Way*, in recognition of her enduring legacy as a fearless community organizer and beloved citizen of Providence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to the family and descendants of Mattie L. Smith, with the profound gratitude of a city forever shaped by her courage and care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon passage a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Department of Public Works so that they may work to manufacture, install and maintain one or more honorary signs at prominent and appropriate locations along Glenham Street which shall reflect the *Miss Mattie L. Smith Way* honorary designation.

IN CITY COUNCIL

SEP 04 2025  
READ AND PASSED

  
RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT  
  
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

  
Mayor

Date: 9/5/2025