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TO: Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David D. Whitaker   
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: November 8, 2019

**RE: RESOLUTION APPROVING THE UNVEILING AND DISPLAY OF A  
PORTRAIT OF FORMER DETROIT CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT GIL HILL**

On November 5, 2019 the Honorable Council President Brenda Jones requested that the Legislative Policy Division draft a resolution approving the unveiling and display of a portrait of former Detroit City Council President Gil Hill.

Attached, please find our draft of the resolution.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

**BY HONORABLE COUNCIL PRESIDENT BRENDA JONES**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE UNVEILING AND DISPLAY OF A PORTRAIT OF FORMER DETROIT CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT GIL HILL**

**WHEREAS**, The mission of the Detroit City Council is to promote the economic, cultural and physical welfare of Detroit's citizens through Charter-mandated legislative functions; and

**WHEREAS**, The City Hall Portrait Collection offers a visual history of people whose actions and contributions made a significant impact on the lives of Detroit residents; and

**WHEREAS**, On Tuesday, November 19, 2019 the family, friends and former colleagues of the great statesman, decorated ranking police officer, esteemed movie actor and former City Council President Gil Hill will join the current Detroit City Council as we celebrate Mr. Hill's memory and unveil his portrait to be placed in the Committee of the Whole Room; and

**WHEREAS**, Gilbert Roland Hill, affectionately known as Gil Hill, was born on November 6, 1931, in Birmingham, Alabama. Mr. Hill was the son of Mary Lee Hill, who raised him and his sister, Toni, as a single parent. In the 1940s, the family moved to Washington, D.C., where he completed his education, graduating from Cardozo High School in 1949; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1950 Mr. Hill joined the United States Air Force and was stationed at Selfridge Air Force Base near Detroit. After leaving the Air Force in 1953, he returned to the Detroit area and joined the Wayne County Sheriff's Department in 1957 and two years later, joined the Detroit Police Department; and

**WHEREAS**, For decades, Mr. Hill was a widely respected police officer. Mr. Hill's natural inquisitiveness, probing mind and dogged pursuit of excellence led to his promotion to detective in 1969, where he flourished in the homicide division of the Detroit Police Department. Mr. Hill earned the reputation of being the city's top detective, resulting in his recruitment in 1980 as one of five office veteran "super cops" chosen from around the country to assist the Atlanta Police Department in solving the murders of 11 black children and the disappearance of 4 others, in the "Atlanta Child Murders"; and

**WHEREAS**, The tenacity and expertise of Mr. Hill and the other team members ultimately led to the arrest and conviction of Wayne Williams. The Atlanta case brought Mr. Hill to national prominence; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Hill was promoted to the rank of Inspector in charge of the Homicide Division in 1982, and in 1989, he retired after serving 25 years from the Detroit Police Department at the rank of Commander; and

**WHEREAS**, At age 53, Mr. Hill rose to worldwide fame when he appeared with actor, comedian Eddie Murphy in the *Beverly Hills Cop* film series as Inspector Douglas Todd; and

**WHEREAS,** His intelligence earned him the respect of the Detroit Police Department, and his instinctiveness and wit led him to Hollywood. It was the public's trust that elected him onto the Detroit City Council in 1989. Subsequently, Mr. Hill became Council President by securing the largest number of votes in the 1993 and 1997 elections. Mr. Hill's popularity and success prompted a run for Mayor in 2001 but he was defeated in the general election by Kwame Kilpatrick; and

**WHEREAS,** Among his many accomplishments during his tenure he was most proud of drafting an ordinance which allowed senior citizens to ride the city buses free and students to travel at a reduced rate. Mr. Hill supported other important initiatives such as casino gambling in the city, he helped broker deals for new baseball and football stadiums downtown, and led the partnership between Council and the Administration to create the Commercial Strip Revitalization Project; and

**WHEREAS,** Gil Hill dedicated his life to making Detroit a better place for all and never stopped believing in our city. He was passionate and relentless about changing the narrative about Detroit's perception and reality. While Mr. Hill's life ended on February 29, 2016, his legacy of service and integrity is forever embedded in Detroit's history. **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

**RESOLVED,** That the Detroit City Council hereby approves the portrait unveiling and display of former Detroit City Council President Gil Hill in the Detroit City Council Committee of the Whole Room. **BE IT FINALLY**

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the offices of the City Clerk and the Mayor.