

The following Resolution was adopted by the Democratic National Committee at its meeting on August 25, 2018 in Chicago, IL.

Submitted by: Jason Rae, DNC Secretary/Wisconsin
Martha Laning, Chair, Wisconsin
Khary Penebaker, Wisconsin
Martha Love, Wisconsin
Janet Bewley, Wisconsin
David Bowen, Wisconsin
Andrew Werthmann, Wisconsin
Mahlon Mitchell, Wisconsin
Lottie Shackelford, At-Large/Arkansas

Resolution Honoring the Life and Career of Vel Phillips

WHEREAS, Vel Phillips was born on February 18, 1923, in Milwaukee, WI, to Russell and Thelma Rodgers; and

WHEREAS, after receiving a national oratory scholarship from the Black Elks, she attended Howard University, graduating in 1946; and

WHEREAS, in 1951, she became the first black woman to graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School, where she received her L.L.B. degree; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips married fellow attorney W. Dale Phillips and, with him, became the first husband-wife team admitted to the federal bar in Milwaukee; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips devoted her entire life to equality and civil rights, taking on a leading role of the NAACP in Wisconsin as a young professional; and

WHEREAS, she was elected the first woman ever to sit on Milwaukee's Common Council, and during her time on the council, advocated for fair housing, introducing the city's open-housing ordinance in 1962 and championing it until its passage in 1968; and

WHEREAS, she became the first African American elected to the national committee of a major political party and served with distinction, even knowing Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter on a first-name basis; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips became the first female judge in Milwaukee County, the first African American to serve in Wisconsin's judiciary, and the first woman and the first African American elected as Secretary of State; and,

WHEREAS, even in retirement, Phillips continued to serve her community through organizations such as America's Black Holocaust Museum, the NAACP, and Wisconsin Conservatory of Music; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips founded the Vel Phillips Foundation, which continues to work for justice and equality; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Phillips received such distinctions as the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Wisconsin Alumni Association and had a residence hall at the University of Wisconsin-Madison named in her honor; and,

WHEREAS, Vel Phillips passed away on April 17, 2018;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Democratic National Committee honors Vel Phillips's years of service to our country, the civil rights movement and the Democratic Party, and offers condolences to her family.