



Legislation Text

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Resolution honoring the life and achievements of Harlem Renaissance artist Ernest Crichlow.

By Council Members Clarke, Barron, Comrie, Foster, James, Jennings, Liu, Palma, Sanders Jr. and Weprin

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow, the legendary master painter and Harlem Renaissance notable who influenced generations with his portraits of African-American and Caribbean experiences, died on November 10, 2005, at the age of 91; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow was born on June 19, 1914, to Barbadian immigrants Herbert Crichlow and Irene Clarke Crichlow in Brooklyn, New York; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow studied art in high school and was talented enough to win prizes and a scholarship in advertising art; and

Whereas, In the 1930s, Ernest Crichlow joined a community of Harlem artists, under the tutelage of sculptor Augusta Savage, who would define culture in an era known as the Harlem Renaissance; and

Whereas, During the 1930s, Ernest Crichlow worked and honed his craft at the Harlem Art Center, which was established by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, and, while many of the nation's great Black artists went unrecognized during the mid-20th century, Ernest exhibited his work in northern galleries during the 1940s and 50s; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow founded the Cinque Gallery in Manhattan with fellow artists Romare Bearden and Norman Lewis; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow also served as an instructor at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, City College of New York, the State University of New York at New Paltz, Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina and the

Art Students League; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow was best known for his portraits, which reveal a balance of strength and fragility in his subjects, while also exploring the dynamics of race, politics, urban life, education, science and culture; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow's most famous works include "Lovers", a 1938 lithograph that depicts a Black woman trapped in her bedroom while resisting sexual assault by a hooded Ku Klux Klansman, as well as "White Fence", which shows a young white girl separated from five Black children by an iron fence, and "Mountain Girl of Jamaica", which shows a young woman who is pregnant with the land and sky of possibility; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow was an island artist whose eyes saw his native Brooklyn and his cultural homeland of the West Indies with the same impartial clarity, while his artwork served as a chronicle of the civil rights struggles of his community; and

Whereas, Ernest Crichlow was an inspiration to all who met him or viewed his artwork, and he should be remembered as a direct link to the dynamic history and cultural heritage of African-American art; now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York honors the life and achievements of Harlem Renaissance artist Ernest Crichlow.

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11/22/2005