



CITY OF NEW YORK
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MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
RESOLUTION
“Lamont “Big L” Coleman Way”

RESOLUTION: To support the co-naming at the Northwest corner of West 140th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard to “Lamont “Big L” Coleman Way.”

WHEREAS: Lamont Coleman Phinazee, known professionally as “Big L”, was an American rapper. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most lyrical rappers of all time.

WHEREAS: Lamont Coleman was born in Harlem, New York City, on May 30, 1974, the third and youngest child of Gilda Terry and Charles Davis. He also had a Step-Father, Mr. Phinazee and two older siblings, Donald Phinazee and Leroy Phinazee. As a child, Coleman was affectionately referred to as “Mont Mont”.

WHEREAS: Coleman attended Julia Richman High School. While in high school, Coleman freestyle battled in his hometown of Harlem; in his last interview, he stated, “in the beginning, all I ever saw me doing was battling everybody on the street comers, rhyming in the hallways, beating on the wall, rhyming to my friends. Every now and then, a house party, grab the mic, a block party, grab the mic.” He graduated in from high school in 1992.

WHEREAS: Emerging from Harlem, New York in the early to mid-1990s, Coleman became well known amongst underground hip-hop fans for his freestyling ability, and was eventually signed to Columbia Records, where he released his debut album, “Lifestylez of Da Poor & Dangerous” in 1995, which is now considered by many fans as a classic album. He was notable for using a rap style called “compounding”.

WHEREAS: On February 15, 1999, Coleman was a victim of violence and was killed by an unknown assailant in his hometown of Harlem. This loss of life was something that has been felt by many in his Harlem neighborhood, as well as, felt around the entire world of music. Many luminaries of the music business along with fans came to Coleman’s funeral to pay their respects.

WHEREAS: Many tributes have been given to Coleman. The first was by Lord Finesse and the other members of DITC on March 6, 1999 at the Tramps. *The Source* has done multiple tributes to him: first in July 2000 followed by March 2002. *XXL Magazine* did a tribute to Lamont in March 2003. In 2004, Eminem made a tribute to him in his music video for his single, “Like Toy Soldiers”. Jay Z had stated in an interview with MTV, “We were about to sign him right before he passed away. We were about to sign him to Roc-a-Fella. It was a done deal...I think he was very talented...! think he had the ability to write big, and big choruses.

WHEREAS: Noted for his use of wordplay, multiple publications *AllMusic*, *HipHopDX* and *The Source* have praised Coleman for his lyrical ability. He has also been described by Henry Adaso, a music journalist for “About.com”, as “one of the most auspicious storytellers in hip hop history.” Regarding Coleman’s legacy, Nas said on MTV, “Yo, it’s no way I can compete if this is what I gotta compete with.” *HipHop DX* called Coleman “the most underrated lyricist ever”.

WHEREAS: Some of his lyrics seemed to glorify and promote violence and the objectification of women however it is noted that Big L spoke to the reality that he lived. He also recorded messages of hope and positively facing the challenges of urban life for a young black man in America.

WHEREAS: A mural has been constructed on 140th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard, this mural has become a well-recognized tourist attraction in Harlem. This mural receives visits from people as far away as Japan and many other foreign countries. Upwards of 4,000 international tourists visit the mural annually, which is evident that Big L's impact reached far beyond the corridors of Harlem.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Manhattan Community Board 10 wishes to remember Lamont "Big L" Coleman by formally requesting that the New York City Council and the Mayor of New York City enact legislation to support the co-Naming of the Northwest Corner of West 140th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard to "Lamont "Big L" Coleman Street" on February 5, 2020 by a vote of 31 YES; 1 NO; 0 ABSTENTION; and 0 recusals.