

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of The Honorable Robert A. Harlem, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, The State of New York is deeply saddened by the loss of its esteemed residents and distinguished public servants; and

WHEREAS, Former New York State Supreme Court Judge Robert A. Harlem of Oneonta, New York, and a winter resident of Venice, Florida, died on Thursday, September 13, 2012, at the age of 86; and

WHEREAS, Born on Flag Day, June 14, 1926, in New York City, to Helen (Goetz) and Leroy Harlem, Robert A. Harlem was very patriotic and exhibited his love of his country by wearing a United States flag pin almost every day; and

WHEREAS, He was raised in Yonkers the second oldest of five children; despite losing his father as a young boy, he did not let that deter him from obtaining his education and pursuing his dreams; and

WHEREAS, Robert A. Harlem served his country as a member of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, He graduated from Champlain College, and in 1953, he moved to the Oneonta area after graduating from Albany Law School; he then joined the law firm of Harrington and Bookhout in Oneonta, New York; and

WHEREAS, Robert A. Harlem's unmatched oratorical skills, prolific writing abilities, mental agility and passion for the law enabled him to become a most revered litigator; he was a lawyer's lawyer; still trying cases into his early 80s, his legal career spanned six decades; and

WHEREAS, This distinguished attorney worked as a trial lawyer, a judge and in private practice; he was elected Otsego County and Surrogate Court Judge in 1972; he was nominated for state supreme court in 1978, and subsequently elected to serve the sixth judicial district; and

WHEREAS, He served as New York State Supreme Court Justice, 1979 to 1991; as Otsego County Surrogate Court Judge, 1975 to 1978; as Otsego County attorney; and town attorney during the 1950s through the 1970s for many surrounding towns until he became surrogate court judge; and

WHEREAS, In 1991, Judge Robert A. Harlem retired from the bench and practiced law with his son, Richard A. Harlem; and

WHEREAS, Robert A. Harlem's commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, He incorporated the Oneonta Boys and Girls Club in 1964, and served on its board; served as the attorney for the Goodyear Lake Association and was instrumental in saving the lake from being drained; and attorney for the Holy Name Society and the Newman House; and

WHEREAS, A congregant of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Robert A. Harlem served as a Grande Knight (Knights of Columbus); a member of the Fox Hospital Foundation; founding member and chairman of the board-Oneonta Indians Football Club; and the Oneonta Country Club, serving as both a director and president; he was very proud that he "shot his age" beginning in his 70s; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Robert A. Harlem was a trustee for the Elks; guest conductor for UCCCA; Otsego County Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year; supporter of St. Mary's School, Orpheus Theater and Hartwick College; member Advisory Board for the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Sarasota County, Florida; supporter of Bon Secours Hospital; founding member of the Community Foundation at the Venice Golf and Country Club; and member of the Board of Directors of the Master Association of the Venice Golf and Country Club; and

WHEREAS, Robert A. Harlem is survived by his wife, Irene; his former wife and mother of his children, Ramona P. Harlem; his six children,

Robert A. (Barbara) Harlem, Jr., Ramona (Richard) Palermo, Richard A.

(Debra) Harlem, Rebecca (John) Lloyd, Ruth Ehrets, and Rosemary (William) Harlem-Wood; eight grandchildren; one brother, Roy (Joan) Harlem; four stepchildren, Charles (Sue) Mann, Donald Mann, Kenneth (Barbara) Mann, and Robert (Karen) Mann; seven step-grandchildren; and six step-great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Robert A. Harlem leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of The Honorable Robert A. Harlem, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of The Honorable Robert A. Harlem.