

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka upon the occasion of their designation for special recognition as "Heroes of Parkinson's"

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are enhanced by the concerned and dedicated efforts of organizations and individuals that generously contribute to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka have given not only of their time and energies but also of their competence, intelligence and leadership, and consequently have been designated for special recognition; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka upon the occasion of their designation for special recognition as "Heroes of Parkinson's"; and

WHEREAS, Tom O'Donnell of Depew, New York, was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1988; Rick Lipka of West Seneca, New York, was diagnosed with the disease in 1998; the two men lean on one another to push each other to remain optimistic and push through barriers brought on by the disease; and

WHEREAS, Nicknamed "Batman and Robin" by the Parkinson's community because of their friendship in overcoming the disease, Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka want those with Parkinson's disease to be able to feel accepted in the workplace and prepare for the future while also being able to revisit old hobbies and remain active; they are most known for reaching out to newly diagnosed patients who need extra support to not give up; and

WHEREAS, Tom O'Donnell co-founded the Parkinson's Wellness Group of Western New York, where Rick Lipka went for support sessions immediately following his diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, Along with helping individuals diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka also assist caregivers and family with understanding the needs of the individuals with Parkinson's disease; they assist those with Parkinson's in obtaining adaptive accessories to be able to continue to live life in a similar manner prior to diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, Both Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka are highly involved in the Parkinson's Action Network, Parkinson's Disease Foundation, and the Michael J. Fox Foundation; they are also involved with the continued development of the National Parkinson's Foundation of WNY (previously, the Parkinson's Wellness Group of Western New York); and

WHEREAS, On May 18, 2013, Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka were presented with a "Local Hero" award at the David Phinney Foundation's Victory Summit based on their nominations from groups such as the University at Buffalo Neurosurgery and University of Rochester Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka upon the occasion of their designation for special recognition as "Heroes of Parkinson's"; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Tom O'Donnell and Rick Lipka.