

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending the Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden upon the occasion of celebrating its 10th Anniversary on July 28, 2013

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality of life of the citizens of the State of New York is greatly enriched by its exceptional cultural, educational and recreational institutions; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden upon the occasion of celebrating its 10th Anniversary on Sunday, July 28, 2013; and

WHEREAS, The Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden, through the experience of an immigrant family's 1890s home, preserves and interprets the cultural and horticultural heritage of Flushing, Queens and adjacent communities to engage their ever-changing populations; and

WHEREAS, The Voelker Orth Museum is an 1891 house and Victorian-styled garden located in the Murray Hill section of Queens, an early commuter suburb for New York City's growing middle class, established in the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, Chartered by the New York State Board of Regents as a history museum, the Voelker Orth Museum is a multi-disciplinary organization whose name and focus, and principal support was derived from the Museum's benefactor, the late Elisabetha Orth; and

WHEREAS, The property was originally part of the estate of the Parsons family who developed a successful nursery business in the 19th century; and

WHEREAS, Conrad Voelcker purchased the home in 1899; a German immigrant, he started a printing business in Manhattan and published a widely read German newspaper; and

WHEREAS, Conrad Voelcker's daughter married Dr. Rudolph Orth, the son of German immigrants and a Cornell graduate, who became a police surgeon with the NYC Police Department; they had a daughter, Elisabetha who became a teacher and lived in the family home throughout her life; and

WHEREAS, When Elisabetha died in 1995, she left the house and property to establish the Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden; and

WHEREAS, Acting posthumously, on the directions described in Elisabetha Orth's will, a committee formed drawing representatives from the Queens Botanical Gardens, the Queens Historical Society and the Theodore Roosevelt Bird Sanctuary to establish the new organization in 1997; and

WHEREAS, The Voelker Orth Museum was incorporated in 1999 and opened to the public in 2003 following extensive restoration of the 1890s house and garden; and

WHEREAS, Based in an area that is rich in history and dynamic in its diversity, the Voelker Orth Museum invites audiences in Flushing and beyond to explore and experience connections to the past and our shared heritage; it is a place for discovery, reflection and learning; and

WHEREAS, The Voelker Orth Museum engages audiences through the arts, nature, horticulture and local history; it is committed to presenting programs in a multi-disciplinary manner, using different modes of inquiry and discovery; and

WHEREAS, The Museum provides a number of volunteer and intern training opportunities, working with the Chinese Planning Council, Flushing International High School, Korean Community Family Services, and other area schools and colleges; young people get to experience working with primary source documents in the archives, learn researching methods and

participate in gardening; and

WHEREAS, Public programs include an annual Oktoberfest, free summer performances of Shakespeare in the garden, jazz and classical performances in the parlor, family programs about honeybees and home gardening, jewelry-making workshops, lectures and tours about local history; and

WHEREAS, The remarkable success of the Voelker Orth Museum is due in large part to its dedicated board of directors and Executive Director Deborah Silverfine; the board members are Ferdinand Gerber, President; Catherine Fitts, Vice-President; James Driscoll, Vice-President; Lola McLinden, Treasurer; Marianne Giacalone, Secretary; Arlene Cusumano; Lynn Hanousek; Joan Kingsley; Patricia Sherwood; Barbara Silver; Roland G. Wade; and

WHEREAS, The expert staff of the Voelker Orth Museum, are and always have been characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence, and accordingly merit the commendation of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden upon the occasion of celebrating its 10th Anniversary on July 28, 2013; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Voelker Orth Museum, Bird Sanctuary and Victorian Garden.