

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Grace Rutagengwa upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by Fulton-Montgomery Community College

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to act, in accord with its long-standing traditions, honoring the youth of today, and leaders of tomorrow, whose character and achievements best exemplify the ideals and values cherished by this great State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Grace Rutagengwa upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by Fulton-Montgomery Community College; and

WHEREAS, Grace Rutagengwa is receiving this esteemed honor for her volunteerism as a student ambassador, welcoming new students to the Johnstown campus and conducting campus tours, and for sharing her survivor's story at local high schools, churches and at the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, Grace Rutagengwa earned her associate degree at Fulton-Montgomery Community College this year, marking yet another big step along an extraordinary journey for a survivor who endured the unspeakable horrors of the genocide in Rwanda in which her parents and three siblings were killed; and

WHEREAS, Grace Rutagengwa, 22 years old, maintained a 3.0 GPA with English being her fifth language; she proudly accepted her diploma from Robin DeVito, a mother of two who became her guardian and surrogate mother several years ago and who raised her as her own; and

WHEREAS, Friends dubbed Rutagengwa "Amazing Grace" after learning of the atrocities she endured; Grace was the youngest of four children raised on her family's prosperous farm in Ntyazo in southern Rwanda; and

WHEREAS, Her parents were well-educated members of the minority Tutsis; they employed farmhands who were Hutus, the majority ethnic group; in the spring of 1994, ethnic tensions boiled over and ended in Africa's worst genocide in modern times; and

WHEREAS, Grace Rutagengwa met Robin DeVito, who took her into her home in Duanesburg, and in 2011, she graduated from Duanesburg High School with a Regents diploma and scholastic awards; and

WHEREAS, Grace Rutagengwa was the subject of a 2011 TIMES UNION profile; Robin DeVito and Grace moved in 2012 to an apartment in Amsterdam, New York; and

WHEREAS, An example of incredible perseverance, Grace Rutagengwa truly worked hard; currently, she works at St. Mary's Hospital in Amsterdam as a patient assistant in the radiology department and plans to continue her education at FMCC studying radiology with a goal of becoming a radiology technician; 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 celebrated and 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 Grace Rutagengwa upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by Fulton-Montgomery Community College, and best wishes for a future of purposeful success and well-being; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Grace Rutagengwa.