

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 77th Anniversary of the first Aerial Transatlantic Passenger Flight

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize anniversaries of significance which exemplify the history and development of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 77th Anniversary of the first Aerial Transatlantic Passenger Flight; and

WHEREAS, In the early afternoon on June 28, 1939, a crowd began to gather along the shore of Long Island's Manhasset Bay; by 1:30, several thousand New Yorkers were straining to catch a glimpse of the gray leviathan bobbing gently on the waves at Port Washington, New York; and

WHEREAS, The gray Dixie Clipper was an imposing sight as it sat there waiting for its crew of 12 and 22 passengers to board, weighing close to 42 tons, it was 109 feet long, 28 1/2 feet high and had a wingspan of 152 feet; and

WHEREAS, The giant flying boat, with the words "Dixie Clipper" painted on her bow and "Pan American Airways System" on her fuselage, was about to take to the air on a journey into history; the Boeing 314 was the first aircraft to carry passengers across the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, The Dixie Clipper's four giant engines coughed into life at 1:59 p.m. and it started to taxi across the bay; as the band played on and the crowd of 5,000 cheered, it rose into the sky, the roar of its engines drowning out the gun salutes from four yacht clubs and the whistles from the craft in the harbor; and

WHEREAS, With the ship's departure at 2:12 p.m. on a 4,650-mile flight, aviation's long-cherished dream of regular transatlantic passenger service by plane became a reality; it would be 42 hours and 10 minutes before Captain Robert Oliver Daniel Sullivan landed the Dixie Clipper in the French port of Marseilles, the flying boat had a top cruising speed of only 150 m.p.h., and it had to stop for fuel along the way; and

WHEREAS, The name Dixie Clipper was bestowed on the plane because of the southern route it flew to Europe: first to Horta in the Azores, then on to Lisbon in Portugal, where the crew and passengers spent the night in a hotel, and finally on a curving path around the Portuguese and Spanish coasts and across the Mediterranean to Marseilles; it was not allowed to fly the overland route because the Spanish Civil War was still in progress; and

WHEREAS, The flying boat could carry up to 40 passengers, so the 22 aboard on this trip had more than enough room; everything was first-class, with the interior of the aircraft paneled in wood and each compartment and the main salon having windows from which to take in the view; and

WHEREAS, Six women were among the 22 passengers, most of whom were wealthy, well-known or both; they included C. V. Whitney, the Chairman of Pan Am; Railroad Executive, W. J. Eck, who had applied eight years earlier to be on the first transatlantic passenger flight; and Louis Gimbel of Gimbel's department store; and

WHEREAS, The first leg of the flight ended with an ocean landing in the Azores between the islands of Faial and Pico, which went without a hitch on the inaugural flight; and

WHEREAS, After a 1-hour, 24-minute refueling stop in Horta (the 4,200 gallons of fuel aboard were not enough for the whole trip) the Dixie

Clipper took off again, this time for Lisbon, where it arrived 6 hours, 44 minutes later; and

WHEREAS, Refreshed by the layover of 1 hour, 26 minutes, the crew and passengers set off on the morning of June 30, 1939, on the last leg to Marseilles, landing at the harbor there at 1:21 p.m. local time; and

WHEREAS, In all, the historic journey had taken 42 hours, 10 minutes, including 29 hours and 20 minutes of flying time; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commemorate the anniversary of those historical events that occurred and serve as lasting reminders of our rich and unique past; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 77th Anniversary of the first Aerial Transatlantic Passenger Flight.