

**BY:** Senator BRESLIN

**HONORING** Michael Cocca, Jr., Founder and CEO of the Franklin Hospitality Group, upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2017 Corporate Partners of the Year Award by the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany on April 8, 2017

**WHEREAS,** It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

**WHEREAS,** This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Michael Cocca, Jr., Founder and CEO of the Franklin Hospitality Group, upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2017 Corporate Partners of the Year Award by the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany, to be celebrated at its Annual Visionary Gala, on Saturday, April 8, 2017, at the Franklin Plaza Ballroom in Troy, New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Since 1908, the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany (NABA) has provided comprehensive services and programs to residents of the greater Capital Region who are blind or visually impaired; in 2016, they helped over 900 individuals of all ages across 11 counties adapt to vision loss, maximize remaining vision, achieve their goals, and expand their independence; and

**WHEREAS,** In addition, NABA offered screenings to over 3,640 children between 18 months and five years of age for possible vision problems; and

**WHEREAS,** Michael Cocca, Jr. is a longtime friend of the NABA; for the past several years, he has graciously devoted his time and energies to helping the NABA fulfill its mission of providing critically needed support, guidance and assistance to the blind and visually impaired across the Capital Region; and

**WHEREAS,** Michael Cocca, Jr. was born to Michael and Marian Cocca in Green Island, New York; through their example, he began a life-long career of servitude as a youth peer leader at the local community center; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1976, Michael Cocca, Jr. graduated from SUNY Cobleskill with a degree in restaurant management; shortly thereafter, he purchased his aunt's diner where he established Michael's Catering Service; through his attention to detail, delicious food and dedicated staff, the venture became very successful; and

**WHEREAS,** Michael's Catering Service catered weddings, bar mitzvahs, corporate events, and private parties; not only did they deliver food, they also delivered memories through unparalleled cocktail hours,

impeccable service, fine china, elaborate dessert stations and innovative style and decor; and

**WHEREAS,** A true visionary, Michael Cocca, Jr. purchased the Marine Midland Bank in 1992; he transformed the bank into the Franklin Plaza, Capital Region's most elegant and grand ballroom; and

**WHEREAS,** In 2001, Michael Cocca, Jr. decided to broaden his horizons and purchased the old Super 8 Motel located across the street from the Franklin Plaza and transformed it into the Franklin Square Inn and Suites; this Best Western Plus hotel has been awarded the perfect score of a 1000 point hotel for 10 years in a row; and

**WHEREAS,** Michael Cocca, Jr. then decided to buy the former Mario's Theatre and Banquet House on Campbell Avenue in Troy, and created what is now known as the Franklin Terrace Ballroom; and

**WHEREAS,** Michael Cocca, Jr. is a proud member of the Chaine des Rotisseurs - Bailliage de Albany, the Escoffier Society and the American Culinary Federation; he has also served on many worthy local Boards of Directors such as the New York State Restaurant Association, the Capital Chamber of Artists, the Aids Council of New York State, the SUNY Cobleskill Food Service Advisory Committee, the Knights of Columbus Third Order, the Italian Fraternal Society of Green Island, and the Troy BID as well as the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall; and

**WHEREAS,** This remarkable man has been the recipient of several prestigious awards including the Father Flannigan Humanitarian Award, the John R. (Jack) Dwyer Award, and the Monsignor Mulqueen Award; in addition, he was named the Restaurateur of the Year by the New York State Restaurant Association, the **Hudson Valley Magazine** Caterer of the year three times, the **Metroland** People's Choice Caterer of the year five times, and served as the Grand Marshall of the Flag Day Parade in Troy; and

**WHEREAS,** Dedicated to the community in which he lives and works, Michael Cocca, Jr. and his team provide fundraising and charity events at all of their venues for little or no cost to the non-profit organizations which provide all levels of services to the community; and

**WHEREAS,** Under the luminous leadership of Michael Cocca, Jr. the success of the Franklin Hospitality Group is in direct correlation to the efforts of its managing partners Michael Fusco, Joseph Galuski, and Greg Cushman, and its staff, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the institution and the community it serves; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the quality of life in their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their profession, certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to

honor Michael Cocca, Jr., Founder and CEO of the Franklin Hospitality Group, upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2017 Corporate Partners of the Year Award by the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Michael Cocca, Jr., Founder and CEO, the Franklin Hospitality Group.