

BY: Senator KENNEDY

HONORING Mary Kay Heneghan upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the Irish Woman of the Year Award by the Amherst Gaelic League on March 10, 2017

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those individuals and organizations which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Mary Kay Heneghan upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the Irish Woman of the Year Award by the Amherst Gaelic League, to be celebrated at its 45th Annual Irish American Appreciation Party on Friday, March 10, 2017, at Salvatore's Italian Gardens, Depew, New York; and

WHEREAS, Mary Kay Heneghan began Irish dancing at the age of four under the tutelage of Paul Tynan; her mother, also an Irish dancer, faithfully brought her to dance classes and promoted her daughter's love of Irish dance; and

WHEREAS, The first Western New Yorker to receive her Irish dance teacher certification, Mary Kay Heneghan passed her adjudicators exam in 1997, and has judged everywhere from the local competitive level to internationally at the World Championships; she also holds a graduate degree in counseling education from Canisius College; and

WHEREAS, Mary Kay Heneghan is the founder of Rince na Tiarna (RNT) School of Irish Dance, one of the most successful schools in North America; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous direction of Mary Kay Heneghan, Rince na Tiarna, Gaelic for Lord of the Dance, maintains a standard of excellence that is only possible through dancers' deep respect for themselves and their art form; her achievements and influence have echoed far beyond the boundaries of the local Irish community; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, Rince na Tiarna has become a leader among Irish dance schools nationwide, and each year, breaks new ground with its intricate step dancing and elaborate choreography; and

WHEREAS, With locations in Erie, Pennsylvania and throughout Western New York, the family oriented school teaches students from tots to young adults, while nurturing pride in Gaelic culture; students are encouraged to pursue performance, traditional and competitive dancing at their own pace; and

WHEREAS, Not content to simply be one of the finest competitive instructors of Irish dance, Mary Kay Heneghan has expanded the school's

range and repertoire in a host of imaginative new directions; her innovative choreography has been performed on "The Today Show," in collaboration with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and in front of dignitaries from Governor Casey of Pennsylvania to Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Corrigan; and

WHEREAS, As a choreographer, Mary Kay Heneghan has worked in genres as varied as Buffalo's Ensemble Theater to the set of the "Tonight Show"; she also worked as a choreographer in the film, "Traveller"; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, Rince na Tiarna became the first North American school to win the All Ireland Championships in team dancing, as well as solo titles at the World, All Ireland and North American Championships; in addition, RNT dancers have gone on to perform with Michael Flatley in "Lord of the Dance" and to tour with "Riverdance"; and

WHEREAS, This high kicking, fast footed Buffalo sweethearts' amazing accomplishments have also been acknowledged by Buffalo's Top 40 Under 40 as well as Irish America Magazine's Top 100 distinctions; and

WHEREAS, A true asset to her community, Mary Kay Heneghan volunteers for several organizations including SPCA and Gateway-Longview; and

WHEREAS, Mary Kay Heneghan has personified the spirit of volunteerism, demonstrating a gift for leadership, a devotion to family, a commitment to her Irish heritage, and a determination to make her community a better place in which to live; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom 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 Mary Kay Heneghan upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of the Irish Woman of the Year Award by the Amherst Gaelic League on March 10, 2017; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Mary Kay Heneghan.