

BY: M. of A. Fahy

COMMENDING Nell Stokes upon the occasion of being
named a 2017 Woman of Distinction

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those women of achievement within the Empire State who have made strong contributions to their communities and who inspire others through their model citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Nell Stokes upon the occasion of being named a 2017 Woman of Distinction; and

WHEREAS, Women of every race, class, and ethnic background have made invaluable contributions to the growth and strength of New York State in countless recorded and unrecorded ways; and

WHEREAS, Each year, the State of New York officially sets aside time to recognize the achievements and lives of these exemplary women, representatives of the wide-ranging and vital roles women have played in the historic development of this great Empire State and its communities; and

WHEREAS, Nell Stokes was born and raised in Montgomery, Alabama; at the young age of 16, she proudly participated in the historic bus boycott that launched the national Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, Nell Stokes relocated to the Capital District; in 1972, she decided to continue her education by attending Hudson Valley Community College and the College of St. Rose, where she studied Human Services; and

WHEREAS, Nell Stokes became an active member of her community in the early 1970s when she was the first African-American to run an independent candidacy for a seat on the Albany School Board; she has served on numerous Boards, including Parsons Child and Family Services, the Neighborhood Resource Center, and the South End Improvement Corporation as its secretary for six years; and

WHEREAS, Currently, Nell Stokes is on the Board of the Capital Area Council of Churches, and chaired the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship/Memorial Service Committee for a total of 18 years; and

WHEREAS, Nell Stokes demonstrated her creativity in 1980 while being employed by the Albany YWCA; she created, designed and implemented the Black American Essay Contest which encouraged students ages eight to 18, to develop their skills in research and writing; and

WHEREAS, In addition, this remarkable woman volunteers with the 15 Love Reading Program at Giffen Elementary School in Albany; and

WHEREAS, Nell Stokes continues to use her creative talents by writing, producing and directing original plays; her works are numerous and have been presented in the Albany Civic Theatre's Playwrights Showcase; and

WHEREAS, Nell Stokes retired as a caseworker from the Albany County Department of Social Services in 2003; she is a co-founder of the Black Women's Association of Albany, where she served as Secretary, Treasurer and President, and is currently a Member-at-Large; and

WHEREAS, Nell Stokes is a member of the NAACP, the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region, Inc. and the League of Women Voters; she is a founding member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, a Charter Member of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body recognizes that New York State is the home to countless women who are strong and colorful threads, vital to the fabric of our rich heritage, who have contributed, and continue to add to the advancement of our culture through their traditional and non-traditional roles in society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Nell Stokes upon the occasion of being named a 2017 Woman of Distinction; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Nell Stokes.