

BY: M. of A. O'Donnell

CONGRATULATING Marie Runyon upon the occasion of celebrating her 102nd Birthday

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to commemorate and recognize certain milestones celebrated by citizens of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Senior citizens bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the increasingly active roles they play in today's society; their past contributions and future participation are a vital part of, and valuable asset to, the fabric of community life and activity; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to congratulate Marie Runyon upon the occasion of celebrating her 102nd Birthday; and

WHEREAS, Marie Runyon was born to a pharmacist in the mountains of Brevard, North Carolina, on March 20, 1917; after graduating from Berea College in Kentucky, she pursued graduate studies in psychology in North Carolina, Kentucky and Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, Marie Runyon became a nurse's aide and then a clinical psychologist in Minnesota and Connecticut; seeking her fortune, she came to New York City in 1946, and took a job as a copy reader, becoming the second female reader for the **New York Post**; and

WHEREAS, Marie Runyon worked tirelessly for more than five decades of her life to right racial and criminal injustice, through such organizations as the ACLU and SANE; and

WHEREAS, From 1974-1976, Marie Runyon served as a distinguished member of the New York State Assembly, where she focused on issues of housing and criminal justice reform and donated most of her salary to a foundation to feed the elderly; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, Marie Runyon founded and served as Executive Director of the Harlem Restoration Project, a non-profit organization which helped Harlem families acquire apartments through the city's Tenant Interim Lease program, and renovated the apartments with labor provided by ex-offenders; the Harlem Restoration Project grew to manage 500 units, half of which housed formerly homeless families, as well as providing jobs to over 500 ex-offenders; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Marie Runyon established the Morningside Tenants Federation which diligently works to help tenants keep their homes and protect affordable housing for both community members and Columbia University students in the Morningside Heights neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, Marie Runyon was also an active member of the Granny Peace Brigade, an organization opposing the use of military force to resolve conflicts; and

WHEREAS, A woman of many interests, Marie Runyon was proud to be a member of the Screen Actors Guild, and made appearances in Spike Lee's 2008 "Miracle at Santa Ana" and Jonathan Demme's 2004 "Manchurian Candidate"; and

WHEREAS, Marie Runyon, with her zest for life, has inspired and enhanced the lives of her family and friends; and

WHEREAS, This exceptional centenarian has experienced the incredible joys and sorrows characteristic of and reserved for those with the stamina and courage to savor a full life; and

WHEREAS, Marie Runyon has enriched the lives of those around her through her joyous and sincere love for others and through the quiescent charm and wisdom which comes only from a fullness of years; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to publicly recognize those who have reached such a remarkable age and who have witnessed and celebrated the innovations, cultural developments and awesome achievements of this country during the last century, while themselves contributing to the growth and excellence of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to congratulate Marie Runyon upon the occasion of celebrating her 102nd Birthday; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Marie Runyon.