

**BY:** M. of A. Kolb

**HONORING** John J. Van Niel upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2016 Citizen of the Year Award by the Seneca County Chamber of Commerce on January 27, 2017

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished citizens who would devote their life's work and purpose to community service, contributing to the welfare of the citizens of their communities and this great Empire State; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor John J. Van Niel upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2016 Citizen of the Year Award by the Seneca County Chamber of Commerce, to be celebrated at its Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Friday, January 27, 2017, at Ventosa Vineyards, Geneva, New York; and

**WHEREAS,** John J. Van Niel has been called upon to contribute his time and talents to countless civic and charitable endeavors and has always given of himself unstintingly; and

**WHEREAS,** Born on October 6, 1964, to Jack and Pat Van Niel in Rochester, New York, John J. Van Niel received an Associate's degree in Natural Resources Conservation from Finger Lakes Community College in 1983; and

**WHEREAS,** John J. Van Niel went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Education from SUNY Cortland in 1986, as well as a Master's degree in Wildlife Management from Utah State University in 1990; he also holds a Doctorate of Education from the University of Rochester; and

**WHEREAS,** A resident of Seneca Falls, John J. Van Niel has served as a Professor of Environmental Conservation at Finger Lakes Community College since 1995; he is also Co-Principal Investigator on National Science Foundation grants, which establishes undergraduate research programs at community colleges throughout the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** Furthermore, John J. Van Niel has been Director of the East Hill Campus since 2010; and

**WHEREAS,** A true asset to his community, John J. Van Niel gives tirelessly of his time and energies to countless organizations; he has been a volunteer with Montezuma Wetlands Complex since 1997 and has served as President of the Friends of the Montezuma Wetlands Complex; he is a guest speaker within the Seneca Falls School District Second Grade and Kindergarten-readiness Programs; and

**WHEREAS,** In addition, this esteemed man has a monthly column in **The Finger Lakes Times** entitled, "Speaking of Nature"; and

**WHEREAS,** With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to educating his students on the importance of volunteerism, John J. Van Niel has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades including the 2015 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching; and

**WHEREAS,** Throughout the entire period of his community service, a period of constructive involvement, John J. Van Niel has stood constant in dignity, good grace and humor; and

**WHEREAS,** With him throughout have been his wife of 25 years, Laura, and their daughter, Danika, both of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

**WHEREAS,** It has always been the objective of this Legislative Body to honor and support those individuals who have displayed their commitment to the betterment of their communities, and it is the intent of this Legislative Body to inscribe upon its records, this tribute to John J. Van Niel, that future generations may know and appreciate their admirable character, their many benevolent deeds, and their respect and esteem in which they are held by their peers; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor John J. Van Niel upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the 2016 Citizen of the Year Award by the Seneca County Chamber of Commerce on January 27, 2017; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to John J. Van Niel.