

Assembly Resolution No. 94

BY: M. of A. Fahy

MOURNING the death of Charles Rodney Johnson, meritorious veteran, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is with feelings of deepest regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Charles Rodney Johnson, a preeminent citizen whose distinguished public service and caring commitment will long serve as standards to which others might aspire; and

WHEREAS, Charles Rodney Johnson, affectionately known as Charlie, truly lived an amazing life; born on September 13, 1932, to James Holdman Johnson and Bert Scrivener Johnson, he died on January 12, 2017, at the age of 84; and

WHEREAS, Raised in Bruce, Mississippi by his mother in a house across from the local Baptist Church, Charlie Johnson was instilled with an abiding desire for social justice and service to others from a young age; and

WHEREAS, As a child, Charlie Johnson displayed a strong interest in the military and spent his days playing soldier, building forts and fighting rubber bullet battles with his friends; he went on to attend Gulf Coast Military Academy in Gulfport, Mississippi, before being accepted into the United States Military Academy at West Point; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from West Point in 1955, Charlie Johnson was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant of Infantry; he then completed Airborne School at Fort Benning before completing Ranger School; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Johnson's military career took him on two tours of duty in Vietnam as a Vietnamese Ranger Advisor, an Operations Officer in the Special Operations Group and finally as a Light Infantry Battalion Commander in the 9th and 25th Infantry Divisions; he also served two tours at West Point in the Physical Education Department and later in the Office of Intercollegiate Athletics; and

WHEREAS, In 1981, after more than 26 years in the United States Army, Colonel Charlie Johnson retired while serving at Fort Devens as the Deputy Post Commander; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Johnson's first job after retirement was at Culver Academies, where he met a young woman named Trudy Hall; after their marriage, having completed a long, successful career in the military, he turned his considerable energies to supporting his wife in her career in education; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, the couple settled in Troy, New York, when Trudy became the Head of Emma Willard School, a preeminent boarding school for girls; Charlie Johnson's unwavering dedication to Emma Willard was on display daily as he cheered on its sports teams, spoke to history

classes about his military experiences, and generally served as a grandfather figure for the entire school community; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Johnson was steadfastly dedicated to our nation's veterans; he served on the North Albany American Legion Post No. 1610, VFW Post No. 8444, Veterans of Lansingburgh, the Rensselaer County Veterans Organization, and as a Stratton VA Medical Center Volunteer DAV Van Driver; and

WHEREAS, In addition, he was on the board of trustees of Oakwood Cemetery, the New York State Governor's Commission for State Veteran Cemeteries, and was especially honored to serve as a member of the board, then president of the Tri County Council Vietnam Era Veterans; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Johnson served as the Grand Marshall of the Albany Veterans Parade in 2008, as well as the Grand Marshall of Memorial Day in Lansingburgh in 2011; that same year he was inducted into the New York State Veterans' Hall of Fame, and in 2014 he was named Veteran of the Year; and

WHEREAS, With a life-long devotion to West Point, his beloved alma mater, Charlie Johnson remained active in the Class of 1955, serving as Class President from 2010 to 2015; he was honored by his classmates with a Distinguished Classmate Award in 2015, one of his most treasured awards; and

WHEREAS, An advocate for the importance of education for all ages, Charlie Johnson served on the advisory board for a leadership program at Duke University, and as the Endowment Chairman of the Tri County Council Vietnam Era Veterans; additionally, he secured scholarships for Russell Sage students studying nursing, physical therapy, and occupational therapy, and helped establish a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Albany High School; and

WHEREAS, With the belief that there is no greater feeling of self-satisfaction than to serve your country and know you served it well, Charlie Johnson truly left his mark on everyone and everything he touched during his long productive life; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his wife of 33 years, Trudy, Charlie Johnson is survived by his first wife, Carol, and their three children, Sam (Carol), Joseph and Wendy, as well as two grandchildren, Bradley and Noel; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Charlie Johnson leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourning the death of Charles Rodney Johnson, meritorious veteran, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Charles Rodney Johnson.