

BY: Senator MAY

HONORING Ruth Johnson Colvin upon the occasion of her designation for special recognition by the New York State Office for the Aging on May 21, 2019

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, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Ruth Johnson Colvin upon the occasion of her designation for special recognition by the New York State Office for the Aging at its Annual Older New Yorkers' Day Celebration on Tuesday, May 21, 2019, at the Hart Theatre Lounge in The Egg, Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, Each May, the New York State Office for the Aging pauses to acknowledge the outstanding contributions made by older citizens during National Older Americans Month; and

WHEREAS, Members of older generations have helped build and shape our Nation to be the greatest in the world; they have defended our freedoms and values to ensure that those who come after them may have better lives; nowhere in the Nation is the legacy of their efforts more visible and more a part of the lives of all citizens than here in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Johnson Colvin, a literacy pioneer, is a native of Chicago, Illinois; in 1940, she moved to Syracuse and earned her Bachelor of Science in Business from Syracuse University, Class of 1959; and

WHEREAS, In 1961, after learning that more than 11,000 people in the Syracuse community were "functionally illiterate," Ruth Johnson Colvin took a proactive approach and began working with professional reading specialists to develop tutor training and instructional materials; and

WHEREAS, In 1962, Ruth Johnson Colvin founded Literacy Volunteers; now known as LiteracyCNY, this non-profit organization provides adults in the Central New York community with the literacy tools and instruction they need to learn English; and

WHEREAS, With Ruth Johnson Colvin's guidance, the literacy volunteer movement quickly spread across the United States; the national organization, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., was incorporated in 1972; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of 50 years, Ruth and her husband, Robert, traveled the world to provide literacy training in more than 60 different countries; today, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. offers more than 330 programs in 42 states, with more than 100,000 volunteers

and students; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, Ruth Johnson Colvin was recognized with the highest volunteerism award in the United States, the President's Volunteer Action Award; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, and in 2006, she received the prestigious Presidential Medal of Freedom; she has also received nine honorary degrees and more than 20 local and national awards, and has published several works, including **Off the Beaten Path: Stories of People Around the World**; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, ProLiteracy was formed when Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. merged with Laubach Literacy International; at the age of 102, Ruth Johnson Colvin continues as an active volunteer tutor and life member of the ProLiteracy and LiteracyCNY board of directors and has started literacy programs in Madagascar and Papua, New Guinea; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, The Ruth J. Colvin Center was created and named after her, aimed at increasing the abilities of Central New Yorkers with limited literacy skills; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Johnson Colvin advice for other New Yorkers regarding volunteering is "If you believe in your idea, you go from there. If you do it with love, it will work out."; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individual for the benefit of others which Ruth Johnson Colvin has displayed throughout her life; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Johnson Colvin has inspired and enriched the lives of those she serves through her volunteerism, generously sharing the wisdom gained over years of experiencing life to its fullest; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Ruth Johnson Colvin upon the occasion of her designation for special recognition by the New York State Office for the Aging on May 21, 2019; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Ruth Johnson Colvin.