

BY: M. of A. Santabarbara

CELEBRATING the life and accomplishments of Kirk Douglas, Hollywood icon, noted philanthropist, and devoted family man

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor the memory of cherished citizens of the State of New York who distinguished themselves in their profession and whose talent, wit, charm, intellect and unique personality permeated all they did; and

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Kirk Douglas who died at his home in Beverly Hills, California, on Wednesday, February 5, 2020, at the age of 103; and

WHEREAS, Kirk Douglas' excellence as an actor and director truly transcended the mediums of film and theater; and

WHEREAS, Three-time Academy Award nominee, and honorary Oscar award-winning actor Kirk Douglas, perhaps best known for his tough guy role in "Spartacus," was born Issur Danielovich to Jewish immigrants on December 9, 1916, in Amsterdam, New York; later, his given name was changed to Isadore, and his family name became Demsky; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his childhood and teenage years, Isadore Demsky worked more than 40 jobs to supplement his father's meager income as a ragman; as a way to escape his difficult life, he poured his emotions into acting in high school plays, and realized he wanted to build a career in theater and acting; and

WHEREAS, Upon graduating, Isadore Demsky hitchhiked to St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, was admitted and given a college loan; he became a star wrestler, and was elected President of the student body in his junior year; and

WHEREAS, During the summers, Isadore Demsky worked as a stagehand at the Tamarack Playhouse in the Adirondacks, where he was given some minor roles; he then tried out for the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City, but was unable to obtain a scholarship; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from college, he decided to change his name to Kirk Douglas, and returned to New York City where he studied acting for two years, played in summer stock, and made his first Broadway appearance in the 1941 musical "Spring Again"; and

WHEREAS, Kirk Douglas proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army for two years, before he was injured in an accidental explosion; and

WHEREAS, In November of 1943, Kirk Douglas married the former Diana Dill, and together, they had two sons, Michael and Joel; and

WHEREAS, Kirk Douglas married producer Anne Buydens on May 29, 1954, and became the proud father of two more sons, Peter and Eric; in 2017, the couple released a book entitled **Kirk and Anne: Letters of Love, Laughter and a Lifetime in Hollywood**, which revealed intimate letters they shared throughout more than six decades of marriage; and

WHEREAS, Kirk Douglas and his family moved to California, and he began his storied film career in "The Strange Love of Martha Ivers," which starred Barbara Stanwyck; in 1949, he earned his first Oscar nomination playing a has-been boxer, Midge Kelly, in "Champion"; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his long and distinguished career, Kirk Douglas recorded over 92 acting credits, including some 75 movies, often times playing a ruthless villain; some of his notable roles included James McLeod in "Detective Story," for which he received a Golden Globe nomination; Jonathan in "The Bad and the Beautiful," for which he received his second Oscar nomination; and Vincent van Gogh in "Lust for Life," for which he earned his third Oscar nomination and his second Golden Globe nomination; and his most famous, a rebellious slave in "Spartacus," which went on to win four Oscars; and

WHEREAS, A rebel in real life, Kirk Douglas formed his own production company, Bryna in 1957, in an effort to manage his own career; and

WHEREAS, As the years went by, Kirk Douglas starred in fewer films, but stayed active in the business as a director, producer and author, writing two novels, and his best-selling autobiography, **The Ragman's Son**; and

WHEREAS, Kirk Douglas was a man of many interests and passions; a true patriot, he served as Special Ambassador under four United States presidents, and in 1981, was the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Kirk Douglas and his beloved wife were an incredibly generous team; they donated significant funds to St. Lawrence University, and various other schools and medical facilities, and supported numerous non-profit organizations in southern California such as the Anne Douglas Childhood Center at the Sinai Temple of Westwood and Harry's Haven, an Alzheimer's treatment facility in Woodland Hills; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable couple established the Anne Douglas Center for Homeless Women at the Los Angeles Mission, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre in 2004, and donated a number of playgrounds in Jerusalem, and the Kirk Douglas Theater at the Aish Center across from the Western Wall; and

WHEREAS, Even though he suffered a stroke in March of 1996, Kirk Douglas persevered and remained a Hollywood fixture; later that year, he gave a moving acceptance speech at the 68th Annual Academy Awards when he received an Oscar for Lifetime Achievement; and

WHEREAS, Kirk Douglas continued to work, playing Chester J. Lampwick in an episode of "The Simpsons," and appeared in films such as "Diamonds", and the 2003 "It Runs in the Family," which co-starred his son, Michael, grandson Cameron, and ex-wife Diana; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his son, Eric, Kirk Douglas is survived by his wife, Anne Buydens Douglas; three sons, Michael, Peter, and Joel; five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild; as well as numerous other relatives, fans and fellow actors, who will long cherish his memory; and

WHEREAS, In appreciation of his life of commitment, dedication and substantial contribution, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to inscribe upon its records this tribute to the memory of Kirk Douglas that many generations may know and appreciate his admirable character, his many benevolent deeds, and the respect and esteem in which he was held; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrating the life and accomplishments of Kirk Douglas, Hollywood icon, noted philanthropist, and devoted family man; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Kirk Douglas.