

Senate Resolution No. 1132

BY: Senator MANNION

MOURNING the death of Eric Carle Jr., beloved children's author and illustrator, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Eric Carle Jr. died on Sunday, May 23, 2021, at the age of 91; and

WHEREAS, Eric Carle Jr. was born on June 25, 1929, in Syracuse, New York, to German immigrants Erich and Johanna Carle; when he was just six years-old, the Carle family moved back to Germany, just before the beginning of World War II; and

WHEREAS, While in Germany, Eric Carle Jr. was beaten at school and was fired at by soldiers; his father disappeared into a Russian prisoner-of-war camp after being drafted to fight for the Nazis, leaving young Eric and his mother hungry during the war; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from a leading German art school, Eric Carle Jr. returned to the United States in 1952; he worked as a graphic designer in the promotion department of **The New York Times** before switching to advertising; and

WHEREAS, Eric Carle Jr. also fought for the United States during the Korean War; he did not begin to write children's books until he was in his 40s; and

WHEREAS, Eric Carle Jr. wrote and-or illustrated more than 75 children's books, including the classic **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** which was welcomed by parents and delighted kids with its story of the metamorphosis of a green and red caterpillar with a touch of blue and brown to a proudly multi-colored butterfly; and

WHEREAS, **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** has sold over 40 million copies, has been translated into 60 languages, has spawned stuffed animal caterpillars, and has been turned into a stage play; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, Eric Carle Jr. released the children's book he titled **Friends**; he built the book around a photo taken in Syracuse during his early childhood, a photo that showed him hugging a small girl in a white dress; he included the photo in the book with a personal note, which read: I often think about my long-ago friend and I wonder what happened to her; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Eric Carle Jr. worked with journalist Sean Kirst to track down the woman in the photo; the girl was identified in what

was deemed an "Easter miracle" by the **Syracuse Post-Standard**, and the two were reunited some 80 years after the photo was taken; and

WHEREAS, The story behind **Friends** was Eric Carle Jr.'s way of remembering his fond memories of Syracuse, New York, a place dominated by color and nature; in wartime Germany, everything was gray and brown, and the cities were all camouflaged with grays and greens and brown greens, there was no color; and

WHEREAS, One of his last books, **The Nonsense Show**, which was published in 2015, was centered on a parade of flying fish, cat-taming mice and circus animals; and

WHEREAS, Eric Carle Jr.'s commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, Eric Carle Jr. and his late wife, Barbara Carle, founded The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art; based in Amherst, Massachusetts, the nonprofit, 40,000-square-foot arts center is a showcase for picture book illustrations from around the world; he received Lifetime Achievement Awards from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Library Association; and

WHEREAS, Eric Carle Jr. is survived by a son and a daughter; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Eric Carle Jr. 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 mourn the death of Eric Carle Jr., and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Eric Carle Jr.