

Senate Resolution No. 1718

BY: Senator MYRIE

MOURNING the death of former New York State Senator Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr., dedicated political leader, adjunct professor, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow that this Legislative Body, representing the people of the State of New York, is moved this day to pay tribute to an eminent gentleman of indomitable faith and dedication whose public service and countless accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Waldaba Hamilton Stewart, Jr., community activist and a trailblazer who paved the way for so many Caribbean-Americans in state government, died on Saturday, January 1, 2022, at the age of 85; and

WHEREAS, Community, tradition, heritage, and social justice were the hallmarks of Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr.'s public and private life for more than four decades; and

WHEREAS, Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. was born in January of 1936 in the Panama Canal Zone in Panama; he was the oldest of six brothers and one sister; his father was a teacher and minister, and a supervising administrator; and

WHEREAS, Young Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. graduated ahead of his peers with an Associate of Arts degree from the Canal Zone Junior College in 1955, and then studied Government Science at Panama National University; and

WHEREAS, As a young adult, he migrated to Brooklyn, New York, completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Languages from Pace University, and a master's degree in Education from Hunter College; during those years while pursuing higher education, he was employed nights at Bathe & Co., a brokerage firm; subsequently, he also received a Ph. D in Economics from Union Institute and University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. taught in the NYC Department of Education from 1957 until 1966; in 1968, with the support of his brothers as campaign managers, he was elected by a landslide to the New York State Senate where he served for four years; and

WHEREAS, As a New York State Senator, Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. served as New York State Chairman of the first National Black Political Convention held in Gary, Indiana, during 1972; and

WHEREAS, Based on his advocacy and community activism, Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. created and developed both the Mid Brooklyn Health Association Inc. and the Mid Brooklyn Health Society, committing himself to his community through public service, geared to the delivery of health care services to benefit communities across Brooklyn including

Bedford Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Fort Greene, and Williamsburg; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. sponsored legislation in health for the improvement of quality care for the poor and underserved communities throughout Brooklyn; with a budget of \$100 million for restoration and modernization, his efforts transformed Kings County Hospital; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. was a founding member of the corporation that converted the Brooklyn Navy Yard into a commercial center and industrial park; and

WHEREAS, Many years after his tenure as a New York State Senator, Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. was self-employed and later became an adjunct professor at Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, he co-founded the Southern Diaspora Research and Development Coalition where he served as Chairman, alongside his late wife, Esmeralda Brown Stewart, who served as its President; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. is survived by his daughter, Zulane Stewart, as well as several siblings and grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Every citizen in New York State has most certainly benefited, in one way or another, from the deep dedication, intelligence and commitment that Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr. brought to his work as a legislator and public policy-maker; loyal friend and trusted advisor, he will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of former New York State Senator Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, 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 Dr. Waldaba H. Stewart, Jr.