

Senate Resolution No. 1745

BY: Senator RATH

MOURNING the death of Gretchen S. Gross, distinguished citizen and devoted member of her community

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

WHEREAS, Gretchen S. Gross of Amherst, New York, died on Saturday, December 18, 2021, at the age of 76; and

WHEREAS, Born on January 6, 1945, Gretchen S. Shaw grew up in Buffalo, New York, and was the eldest of two children; she graduated from Lafayette High School in 1962; and

WHEREAS, Gretchen S. Gross attended Buffalo State College before continuing her post graduate studies at what is now known as Long Island University Global College, during which time she studied abroad in Mexico and India; and

WHEREAS, Upon returning to Buffalo, New York, Gretchen S. Gross began working at one of the area's first day care centers, Kiddie Koral, while taking courses in education and photography at the University at Buffalo (UB); and

WHEREAS, In 1974, Gretchen S. Gross founded the Audubon Child Development Center in Getzville, New York, with three teachers and 21 children; in 1997, the school moved to a newly built facility in Amherst and became Audubon at College Park with 33 teachers and 185 children; and

WHEREAS, Regularly interviewed as an expert on childhood development, Gretchen S. Gross retired in 2012, after an extraordinary career which traversed more than three decades; she truly touched the lives of countless local children; and

WHEREAS, Gretchen and her beloved husband, Gordon R. Gross, were active as volunteers, board members and donors for a variety of charitable, cultural and philanthropic organizations; their substantial donation in 2008 established the Department of Jewish Thought, Heritage and Culture at UB and endowed a professorship; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to local children, Gretchen S. Gross chaired the Jewish Community Center's Early Childhood Committee, its Camp Centerland Committee and served as an officer on the camp's Governance Committee; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the Gretchen S. Gross Omanut (Arts and Crafts)

Center, the largest building at Camp Centerland, was created in 2015; and

WHEREAS, A member of the Association for the Education of Young Children from 1980 to 2010, Gretchen S. Gross served on Temple Beth Zion's Task Force for Early Childhood Education and was a board member of the Bureau of Jewish Education for many years; and

WHEREAS, Gretchen S. Gross served as President of the Jewish Community Center from 2013 to 2015, and received its Ralph Kushner Volunteer Service Award in 2020; in recent years, she was a board member of the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, This extraordinary woman's work with the Buffalo Jewish Federation included chairing its Super Sunday fundraiser and serving on the campaign's Lion of Judah committee as well as its kickoff dinner committee; she and her husband also led a mission to Israel and the Federation bestowed upon her its Nathan Benderson Award in 2016, for her philanthropic leadership and her tireless work in education; and

WHEREAS, A true asset to her community, Gretchen S. Gross gave tirelessly of her time and energies to the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, SUNY Buffalo and its art conservancy program, St. Mary's School for the Deaf and the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by her loving husband in 2019, Gretchen S. Gross is survived by her two stepdaughters, Debra Gross-Weiner and Sandra Wolchok; a brother, Craig Shaw; one aunt, Dorothy Shaw; and three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; and

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

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Gretchen S. Gross, and to express its deepest condolences to her family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Gretchen S. Gross.