

Senate Resolution No. 2374

BY: Senator JORDAN

COMMENDING Kenneth H. Wilber posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Kenneth H. Wilber posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth Harry Wilber was born on February 5, 1946, to Charles L. Wilber and Bernice V. (Akin) Wilber in Hudson, New York; he attended Chatham Central School, Class of 1963, before graduating from Albany Business College in 1965; and

WHEREAS, On October 20, 1965, Kenneth H. Wilber entered the United States Navy in Albany, New York; after completing basic training, he attended additional training at Ellison Field, Pensacola, Florida; he was then assigned to the USS Navasota (AO-106) in Long Beach, California; and

WHEREAS, His deployment in the Western Pacific with the USS Navasota from January 5, 1968 to August 1, 1968, and then again from February 24, 1969 to September 13, 1969, took him to the South China Sea and the Sea of Japan; and

WHEREAS, On January 23, 1968, the USS Navasota was ordered to assist the USS Pueblo, a Navy Intelligence vessel that had been intercepted by the North Koreans while engaged in a routine surveillance in international waters; it would take 11 months of captivity, amid brutality and threats of execution, before the crew of the USS Pueblo were released; and

WHEREAS, Attaining the rank of YN3, he was honorably discharged on October 19, 1971; for his courageous service, YN3 Kenneth H. Wilber received many awards, including: Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea), and the Vietnam Campaign Medal; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his service, Kenneth H. Wilber

returned home and met and married the former Jeannette Lauster, and together they had two children, Tracy and Kyle; and

WHEREAS, For 30 years, Kenneth H. Wilber was employed at Columbia Corporation in Chatham, New York; and

WHEREAS, A respected community leader, Kenneth H. Wilber was elected as the Ghent Town Councilman, serving from 1980 until 1981; Ghent Supervisor from 1980 until 1992; and Columbia County Treasurer from 1996 until 2011; and

WHEREAS, Active in his community, Kenneth H. Wilber was a member of the Ghent VFW No. 5933 (commander, post quartermaster), Ghent Marching and Concert Band, Chatham American Legion Post 42, 3rd District New York Veterans of Foreign Wars (past commander), Rip Van Winkle Counties Council Veterans of Foreign Wars (past commander), Columbia County Honor-A-Vet (chairman), Congressional Military Academy Selection Committee for 18 years, Ghent Volunteer Fire Company (president, board of directors, chaplain), Columbia County Volunteer Firefighters Association, Columbia Greene Community College Board of Trustees, and Chatham Christ Our Emmanuel Lutheran Church (treasurer/councilman); and

WHEREAS, Kenneth H. Wilber died on Saturday, October 27, 2018, at the age of 74, and is buried in the family plot in Ghent Union Cemetery; he is survived by his wife of 51 years, Jeannette; his two children, Tracy Muller and Kyle Wilbur; and his four grandchildren, Troy, Regan, Owen, and Riley; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Kenneth H. Wilber demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Kenneth H. Wilber posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Kenneth H. Wilber.