

BY: Senator KAPLAN

CONGRATULATING The Honorable Leonard L. Finz upon
the occasion of being inducted into the Officer
Candidate School Hall of Fame

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those organizations and individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to congratulate The Honorable Leonard L. Finz upon the occasion of being inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Born in a walk-up tenement in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1924 to immigrant parents, Leonard L. Finz attended elementary school in Brooklyn, New York, where he trained in both music and voice during the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, Leonard L. Finz was accepted as a gifted music student into the High School of Music & Art in upper Manhattan, and after becoming first clarinetist in the prized school symphony orchestra and leader of its jazz band, he was drafted into the United States Army at the age of 18, and proudly served his country during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Upon the successful completion of his basic training, Leonard L. Finz served in the Special Services as a producer, director, and performer of shows he created for thousands of soldiers on the base; and

WHEREAS, "Born of talent," Leonard L. Finz was assigned to the United States Army Band as a saxophone and clarinet specialist; he then applied to the field artillery Officers Candidate School (OCS), passed test requirements, and was accepted into the program; and

WHEREAS, After four months of training, Leonard L. Finz was one of 32 to graduate OCS and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Field Artillery; trained in beach landings, he boarded a troop ship heading for Okinawa and assigned to the first wave attack force upon the Japanese mainland where 400,000 Japanese were dug-in with Kamikaze aircraft support; after Japan surrendered, he was shipped to Leyte, Philippines, to serve as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) lawyer; even though he was not qualified, his impeccable record as an officer proved he could handle the position, and do the job well; and

WHEREAS, For his distinguished service, Leonard L. Finz was the recipient of numerous military medals including the Army Commendation Medal, was inducted into the prestigious United States Army Artillery OCS Hall of Fame, and was presented with the American flag that was

flown in his honor for one full day atop the Capitol of the United States; in addition, his military biography has been filed as a permanent record with the United States Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., which has now been archived and enshrined there for eternity; and

WHEREAS, After being discharged with the rank of 1st Lieutenant, Leonard L. Finz used the GI Bill to earn a Bachelor of Arts and law degree from New York University (NYU), where he was elected President of the entire law student body; and

WHEREAS, During this time, Leonard L. Finz returned to his musical roots, and signed a contract with Music Corp. of America as both a singer and songwriter; he recorded many songs under the stage name "Lennie Forrest," and went on a national tour to many TV, radio, and nightclub venues throughout the United States, where he also performed with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra; and

WHEREAS, Leonard L. Finz also auditioned for the lead Hollywood role in the remake of "The Jazz Singer," and was cast on the NBC soap opera "Another World"; and

WHEREAS, Leonard L. Finz then returned to his legal career and became active in politics, and ran for the New York State Senate and United States Congress; he was appointed Queens County Campaign Chairman for luminaries such as John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson, and was elected the youngest New York City Civil Court Judge at the time; later, he was elected a New York State Supreme Court Justice; and

WHEREAS, After leaving the bench, Leonard L. Finz became a partner in the firm of his former law professor where he won record settlements and verdicts in Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Schenectady, Albany, Syracuse, and other areas of New York State, in addition to New Haven, Hartford and other jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, Leonard L. Finz also taught law courses at Queens College and New York Law School, and served as a faculty member of The National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, Leonard L. Finz founded his own firm, Finz & Finz, and has earned the reputation as a master trial advocate in the courtroom; he has achieved the highest legal rating of "Preeminence" in addition to being peer-reviewed as "One of America's Preeminent Lawyers"; and

WHEREAS, Leonard L. Finz is always available to lend his expertise to the firm's trial lawyers and staff on legal issues and courtroom strategy and offers advice on the prosecution of medical malpractice and personal injury cases; and

WHEREAS, For his steadfast and unrelenting commitment to his profession and community, Leonard L. Finz received numerous award and accolades from various organizations; and

WHEREAS, Leonard L. Finz is also an author who has published many articles and four books; currently, he is working on his fifth thriller novel; and

WHEREAS, Through his numerous years of service, and most importantly his infallible humor and kindness, Leonard L. Finz has dedicated his life to making Manhasset, and Long Island as a whole, a better place to live, work and play; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the quality of life in their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their profession, certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to congratulate The Honorable Leonard L. Finz upon the occasion of being inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Leonard L. Finz.