

BY: Senator COONEY

COMMEMORATING the 30th Anniversary of ImageOut
Film Festival

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize the profound impact of those exemplary organizations and events within the great State of New York which proactively work for the empowerment of minority communities, and the importance of such work which benefits all citizens of this State, and indeed, all citizens of the Nation, should be rightfully commended; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ImageOut Film Festival; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, the Rochester Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival was established under the auspices of The Gay Alliance of the Genesee Valley and The Rochester Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus; and

WHEREAS, The first festival included 18 programs and 100 films and videos and focused upon celebrating and documenting the past and present of the global Lesbian and Gay community; each of these inaugural shows attracted nearly 90% of the theatre's capacity, proving to its founders they started a vital and exciting community event; and

WHEREAS, During this time, the Rochester LGBT community received their first taste of what would become the largest annual cultural event in the area; and

WHEREAS, The festival's second year brought new and innovative changes; the Third Coast Call for Work, a distinct entry category to highlight the work of regional film and video makers, was introduced; in addition, sign-language interpretive services of film programs for the deaf and hearing-impaired community were provided, making Rochester one of only a handful of festivals in North America to offer this essential service; and

WHEREAS, By 1995, the Film Festival had grown dramatically; more than 100 films and videos were exhibited and the first ever closing night gala reception at George Eastman House Museum became an annual celebratory conclusion to the festival week; and

WHEREAS, Archival Night at the Dryden Theatre was also introduced in 1995, featuring classic films of gay cinema's past from the George Eastman House Museum Motion Picture Archives; a third venue, The University of Rochester, allowed the Festival to reach a younger audience, and an enthusiastic and diverse audience of more than 4,000 pressed to attend often sold out films; and

WHEREAS, As a result of such rapid growth and support, the Rochester Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival successfully incorporated in

1996 as an independent, not-for-profit corporation and the festival was named ImageOut; and

WHEREAS, After four years, ImageOut joined the ranks of the ever-growing national Lesbian and Gay Film Festival community, rivaling many festivals in cities both comparable to and larger than Rochester; and

WHEREAS, ImageOut, a community-based volunteer organization, has served as a major vehicle in promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender visibility and understanding; its reach has extended to thousands within the greater Rochester gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community and beyond to the general population of the entire Western New York region; and

WHEREAS, Each record-breaking year brought more programs and larger audiences to the Film Festival; from two venues in 1993 to five venues in 2001, ImageOut not only expanded the number of seats available, but also areas of the city where films were screened; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, 2001s record attendance of 8,500 and 43 different programs of film and video solidified ImageOut's position as the largest lesbian and gay film festival in Upstate New York and the second largest lesbian and gay film festival in all of New York State; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, ImageOut added screenings to the southern part of Monroe County at the Rochester Institute of Technology's Ingle Auditorium with the help of OUTspoken, the RIT LGBT student organization; and

WHEREAS, Today, ImageOut continues to be a leading provider of LGBT arts and cultural programs in the region, hosting the largest film festival in Rochester and the largest LGBT film festival in New York State; and

WHEREAS, The success of ImageOut is in direct correlation to the efforts of its dedicated members and volunteers, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, For three decades, ImageOut has remained true to its mission of presenting LGBT arts and cultural experiences showcasing films, other creative works and artists to promote awareness, foster dialogue and build community; and

WHEREAS, Our society is greatly benefited by the purposeful efforts of individuals who unite for the cause of improving the quality of life for others, and who proactively work toward the goal of dignity for all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ImageOut Film Festival; and be it

further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to ImageOut.