

Senate Resolution No. 725

BY: Senator REICHLIN-MELNICK

MOURNING the death of The Reverend Richard Deats,
internationally known peacemaker, religious leader
and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to bring full recognition and just tribute to those men and women of religious commitment who accept the responsibility of moral leadership and render the wisdom of human understanding; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved to mourn the death of The Reverend Richard Deats of Nyack, New York, who died on Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at the age of 89; and

WHEREAS, Born on February 8, 1932, in Big Spring, Texas, Reverend Richard Deats attended McMurry College in Abilene, Texas, in the early 1950s, where he became active in the Methodist Student Movement; and

WHEREAS, Inspired by Muriel Lester of Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), Reverend Richard Deats became involved in FOR-USA, an interfaith peace fellowship leading the charge on the most pressing human and civil rights issues; and

WHEREAS, After World War II, Reverend Richard Deats volunteered to work at a refugee camp in Germany, and during the Vietnam War, he organized the Committee of Americans for Peace in Indochina and led regular peace vigils outside the United States Embassy in Manila; in 1967, Southern Methodist University Press published his book about his time in the Asian Theater, **Nationalism and Christianity in the Philippines**; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Reverend Richard Deats accepted a position at FOR's national office in Upper Nyack, where he would live and work for the rest of his life; throughout his tenure, he traveled the world promoting peace, nonviolence and reconciliation by writing articles, giving speeches, and leading innumerable training sessions on active nonviolence as a methodology for grassroots movements and social change; and

WHEREAS, Throughout this time, Reverend Richard Deats worked alongside notable civil rights leaders such as Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Coretta Scott King, Reverend Jim Lawson, Mahatma Gandhi's heirs, Thich Nhat Hanh, various Buddhist leaders, and Reverend Daniel Berrigan, as well as South Africa Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and

WHEREAS, On November 2, 1983, Reverend Richard Deats further contributed to the cause of America's freedom, and his commitment to human dignity was visibly mirrored in the spiritual, economic and political dimensions of the civil rights movement when he proudly joined Coretta Scott King at the White House when President Reagan signed into law the national holiday honoring her late husband, Dr. Martin Luther

King Jr.; and

WHEREAS, While living in the Philippines during the early 1980s, Reverend Richard Deats helped organize and present hundreds of workshops on nonviolence attended by tens of thousands of people; he also led 13 peace delegations to the Soviet Union to ease tensions and build relations at the height of the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, In the 1990s, Reverend Richard Deats became editor of FOR's magazine, Fellowship, and published a series of books; he wrote biographies of Gandhi and Hildegard Goss-Mayr, the Austrian peace movement leader, as well as his collection, **Stories of Courage, Hope, and Compassion** and his book of jokes, **How to Keep Laughing - Even Though You've Considered All the Facts**; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Richard Deats is survived by his wife, Jan; two sons, Mark and Stephen; two daughters, Katherine and Lisa; 15 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren, all of whom will long treasure his memory; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Richard Deats' life was truly devoted to the preservation and enhancement of human dignity; this indomitable gentleman's finest legacy of greater social justice for all was truly reflected in his devotion to serve and respect others, and in his steadfast love for all humanity; and

WHEREAS, An apostle of peace, Reverend Richard Deats fought unrelentingly for the civil rights of all Americans and people around the globe, and taught us that through non-violence, courage displaces fear, love transforms hate, acceptance dissipates prejudice and mutual regard cancels enmity; and

WHEREAS, In appreciation of his life of commitment, dedication and substantial contribution, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to inscribe upon its records this tribute to the memory of Reverend Richard Deats that future generations may know and appreciate his admirable character, his many benevolent deeds, and the respect and esteem in which he was held; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of The Reverend Richard Deats, internationally known peacemaker, religious leader and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of The Reverend Richard Deats.