

Assembly Resolution No. 128

BY: M. of A. Lawler

CELEBRATING the life and accomplishments of Noel O'Connell, renowned Gaelic Football Coach, loving husband and devoted father

WHEREAS, Noel O'Connell of Pearl River, New York, died peacefully at home on August 12, 2020, at the age of 65, surrounded by his loving family; and

WHEREAS, Born on December 23, 1954, in Cahersiveen, County Kerry, Ireland to Patrick J. and Mary (O'Sullivan) O'Connell of the "Andy" O'Connell clan, Noel was the youngest of six boys; their family immigrated to The Bronx, New York, when he was six years old; and

WHEREAS, Noel O'Connell spent many childhood summers back in his beloved hometown of Cahersiveen, where he developed his lifelong love and passion for Gaelic games; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, Noel O'Connell began his illustrious career as Coach of the Rockland GAA u12 Boys Gaelic Football Team; during this time, the majority of the players on this team had never picked up a Gaelic football; and

WHEREAS, Noel O'Connell was instrumental in turning this group of boys into an unstoppable force; under his able leadership, the team went on to win the New York League Championship in 1996, 1997, and 1998; and

WHEREAS, A true gentleman, Noel O'Connell treated each of his players as if they were his own children and had a tremendously positive impact on all their lives; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to both his culture and community, Noel O'Connell was very involved with the New York Gaelic Athletic Association in all capacities from player, to coach, to Chairman of the Minor Board where he was honored in February of 2020 as a Guest of Honor at its Annual Dinner Dance; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, he served on the coaching panel of several New York GAA u14 Boys and Girls Feile teams; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his career as a coach, Noel O'Connell worked for Con Edison/Orange and Rockland Utilities for more than 31 years; and

WHEREAS, Overcoming much adversity, Noel O'Connell beat cancer before being diagnosed with ALS in the Fall of 2018; a true fighter, he did not let the diagnosis stop him from living his normal life; he continued to compete in numerous 5K walk/runs, attend Rockland GAA monthly meetings, coach Gaelic football, and travel back home to County Kerry, Ireland; and

WHEREAS, Noel O'Connell could truly light up a room and had a funny

story to fit every situation; he will be fondly remembered for his sense of humor, positive attitude, and love of sport and music; and

WHEREAS, While he was passionate about many things, above all his greatest passion was being a father to his daughter, Maeve Grace, and a husband to his wife of 30 years, Eileen; and

WHEREAS, Noel O'Connell's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through his family's vivid and happy memories; his insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives he touched; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his wife and daughter, Noel O'Connell is survived by his beloved four-legged companion, Trixie; one brother, Joseph (Nancy), four sisters-in-law, Margie, Terri, Lorraine and Bridget; and brothers-in-law Mike (Brenda), Tom (Helena) Gaffney; as well as nephews, nieces, relatives, neighbors and friends; he is pre-deceased by his parents; and four brothers, Padraig (Pauline), Michael, Eugene and Bart; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Noel O'Connell leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing man; he will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Noel O'Connell, and expressing its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Noel O'Connell.