

Assembly Resolution No. 139

BY: M. of A. Zinerman

COMMEMORATING the 205th Anniversary of the
Brooklyn Sunday School Union

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of this State and this Nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 205th Anniversary of the Brooklyn Sunday School Union; and

WHEREAS, The Brooklyn Sunday School Union was organized by Robert Snow, Andrew Mercein, Joshua Sands, Thomas Sands, Joseph Herbert, Reverend Daniel DeVine, John G. Murphy and Thomas Kirk on April 8, 1816, for the purpose of organizing Sabbath Schools or Sunday Schools and to make the borough a better place for its residents to live, work and play; and

WHEREAS, The stalwart members of the Union diligently strived to bolster the borough's social and economic development by establishing free public education, a charter for a savings bank, and the Apprentices' Library Association, which was housed by the Union; and

WHEREAS, The Church was a vital place of not only worship, but education and a place for young people to gather; Sunday Schools held at local churches were the primary source of socialization and education for many African Americans since the public schools were segregated; these schools also lead to the establishment of "African Schools" which later became public schools; and

WHEREAS, The Union also formed and maintained mission schools which became churches, and training schools were founded to assist these new churches in organization, leadership and pedagogy; shortly thereafter, Brooklyn proudly became known as "The Borough of Churches"; and

WHEREAS, The Brooklyn Sunday School Union hosted its first Anniversary Day Parade and services to commemorate its founding in June of 1829; 400 children from four different Sunday Schools participated in that inaugural parade including the Sands Street Methodist Church, St. Ann's Protestant Episcopal Church, The First Reformed Dutch Church and the First Presbyterian Church; and

WHEREAS, On May 24, 1854, 14,600 people from 64 Sunday Schools walked in the 25th Anniversary Day Parade, and during the 50th, 75th, 100th and 200th Anniversary Parades combined, hundreds of thousands of people and hundreds of schools participated; and

WHEREAS, This annual event is truly one of the unique aspects of life in Brooklyn, and in 1905, the New York State Legislature created Brooklyn Day as official holiday; and

WHEREAS, Today, the Board of Managers remains committed to the promotion of the borough's spirituality and the advancement of its churches and millions of citizens economically and socially and pledge to remain steadfast in its mission of helping Brooklyn reach its full potential; and

WHEREAS, After 205 years, the Brooklyn Sunday School Union continues to stand on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades while retaining that spiritual resolve which characterizes its past; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 205th Anniversary of the Brooklyn Sunday School Union; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Brooklyn Sunday School Union.