

Assembly Resolution No. 462

BY: M. of A. Wallace

CELEBRATING the life of Richard F. Griffin,
prominent attorney, civil rights leader and devoted
member of his community

WHEREAS, There are certain outstanding members of our community who, through their selfless commitment and dedication, served to better the quality of life in their community and had a measurable positive impact on the lives of its residents; Richard F. Griffin was one such individual; and

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Richard F. Griffin, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Richard F. Griffin of North Buffalo, New York, died on Thursday, October 14, 2021, at the age of 88; and

WHEREAS, Born on February 22, 1933, Richard F. Griffin, affectionately known as Dick, grew up in North Buffalo; a graduate of Canisius High School, he played baseball and was the star quarterback; he was also the President of the Student Council; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Canisius College and the University at Buffalo Law School, Richard F. Griffin quickly asserted himself as a skilled litigator, specializing in cases involving civil rights, railroads and personal injury; throughout this time, he became involved in many high-profile legal battles; and

WHEREAS, In 1962, Richard F. Griffin represented a group of Black Muslim prisoners fighting for the right to worship and eat foods which were prescribed by their religion in the Attica State Correctional Facility; that lawsuit, which resulted in a successful outcome, led him to a friendship with Malcolm X, the famous Black Muslim leader; and

WHEREAS, In the 1970s, Richard F. Griffin was hired to represent plaintiffs who alleged that Buffalo's public schools were illegally segregated by race; this case resulted in a ruling by U.S. District Judge John T. Curtin ordering a massive desegregation program which changed the makeup of every city school, making it was one of his biggest cases; and

WHEREAS, Richard F. Griffin served one term as President of the Erie County Bar Association; he also chaired or served on many Bar Association committees, concentrating on issues such as civil rights, increased opportunities for women and minorities in the legal profession, and improving legal service for the poor, elderly and disabled; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, Richard F. Griffin received the Medgar Evers Award from the Buffalo Branch of the NAACP, and later won distinguished

alumnus awards from Canisius College and the University at Buffalo Law School; in addition, the State Bar Association honored him for his legal work on civil rights cases, and the Western New York Defense Trial Lawyers Association once named him Attorney of the Year; and

WHEREAS, A fine man, a great lawyer who practiced since 1957, and a towering presence in the courtroom, Richard F. Griffin was a partner at both Moot & Sprague Law Firm and Phillips Lytle Law Firm; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his wife of 66 years, the former Jane Flanigen, Richard F. Griffin is survived by two daughters, Mary and Anne; two sons, Thomas and Richard; a brother, Peter; and five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Richard F. Griffin leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; 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 celebrate the life of Richard F. Griffin, and to express 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 Richard F. Griffin.