

**BY:** Senator STEWART-COUSINS

**CONGRATULATING** the 2024 New York State Senate's  
Historical Women of Distinction

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge and celebrate individuals and events of historic significance which add vitality, sensitivity, understanding and inspiration to the diversity and value of the people of this great Empire State; and

**WHEREAS,** Women of every economic, ethnic and religious background have made significant contributions that are reflected in our cultural, social, educational, industrial and economic diversity, and have contributed in many ways, including as writers, educators, scientists, heads of state, politicians, civil rights crusaders, artists, entertainers, businesswomen, military personnel, aviators, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, health professionals, engineers, religious leaders, judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, athletes, mothers, nurturers, and the building blocks of our communities; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the purpose of this Legislative Body to induct five new honorees for the year 2024: nurse officer and Rear Admiral, Faye Glenn Abdellah (1919-2017); librarian and educator, Pura Belpre' (1899-1982); social activist, Susan Wu Rathbone (1921-2019); singer and composer, Joanne Lynn Shenandoah (1957-2021); organic chemist, Giuliana Tesoro (1921-2002); and

**WHEREAS,** Women who have become part of New York's lasting heritage by fighting against stereotypes, prejudice and seemingly insurmountable obstacles include: Sojourner Truth (1797- 1883), former slave and famous activist; Harriet Tubman (1820-1913), best-known "conductor" of the Underground Railroad and promoter of Black education and women's rights; suffragettes Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902); world-renowned folk artist Grandma Moses (1860-1961); famed reporter Nellie Bly (1867-1922); Sybil Ludington (1761-1839), known as the "female Paul Revere"; Barbara McClintock (1901-1992), Nobel Prize-winning genetic scientist; and "First Lady of the World," Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962); and

**WHEREAS,** New York State has been, and continues to be, the home to many distinguished women who have made their mark in history as the first in their field to succeed; representative of these "firsts" are contributions by women such as: Lady Deborah Moody (1586-1659), first woman grantee for land ownership in the New World; Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), first female physician; America's first trained nurse, Linda Richards (1841-1930); Emma Willard (1787-1870), founder of the first endowed institution of education for women; hairdressing entrepreneur, Madam C.J. Walker (1867-1919), Harlem leader and first self-made female millionaire in the U.S.; Buffalonian Louise Blanchard Bethune (1856-1913), first professional female architect in the Nation; Lucille Ball (1911-1989), actor and president of Desilu Productions, the first woman to lead a major Hollywood production company; Katharine

Bement Davis (1860-1935), New York City Correction Commissioner, first woman to head a major City agency; Winifred Edgerton Merrill (1862-1951), the first American woman to receive a Ph.D. in Mathematics;

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1919), the first and only woman to be presented with the Congressional Medal of Honor; and Belva Lockwood (1830-1917), the first woman to practice law before the United States Supreme Court; and

**WHEREAS,** This Legislative Body recognizes that New York State is the home to countless women who are strong and colorful threads, vital to the fabric of our rich heritage, who have contributed, and continue to add to the advancement of our culture through their traditional and non-traditional roles in society; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the induction of five new inductees into the New York State Senate's Historical Women of Distinction 2024 exhibit; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the National Women's Hall of Fame and the New York State Division for Women.