

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMEMORATING the 95th Anniversary of the Capitol
Theatre in Rome, New York on December 10, 2023

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to those cultural institutions and organizations whose commitment to promoting the richness and diversity of the arts and entertainment world has contributed to the strength, vitality, and cultural enrichment of their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, it gives this Legislative Body great pleasure to commemorate the 95th Anniversary of the Capitol Theatre, celebrated with a series of history-related events throughout the year, culminating with the 95th Anniversary show on Sunday, December 10, 2023; and

WHEREAS, The Capitol Theatre opened its doors for the first time on Monday evening, December 10, 1928, as a joint venture by the M.E. Commerford Amusement Company of Scranton, Pennsylvania and Kallet Theaters, Inc., headquartered in Oneida, New York; the theater was designed by Leon H. Lempert, Jr., and was the first building in the city to be purpose-built as a movie house; and

WHEREAS, With Joseph Kallet as Managing Director of the theater, Rome's first theatre with the ability to play the new sound movies displayed their initial showing on their opening day, which included a newsreel, two Vitaphone shorts, and the First National feature, "Lilac Time," starring Colleen Moore and Gary Cooper, with accompanying music; and

WHEREAS, Visitors attending the Capitol Theatre originally would experience a Spanish-Moroccan themed interior with brown, gold, blues, and reds, however in 1939, the Capitol Theatre received a modernistic design which is preserved to this day with geometric shapes of yellow, green, orange, red, gold, and silver hues decorating the historic building and a 1,788 seat auditorium; and

WHEREAS, Though primarily made to be a movie house by the Kallets, in 1929 the Capitol Theatre hosted its first celebrity act with the Art Kahn's Orchestra performing on the Capitol stage; after that, many live performances graced the theatre, such as the California Ramblers, Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys, the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra, Bill Haley & the Comets' and others; and

WHEREAS, The Capitol Theatre closed its doors on May 28, 1974, but was later revived in 1985 by a group of dedicated individuals who opened the Capitol Civic Center as a not-for-profit corporation to preserve the arts in Rome, New York; and

WHEREAS, Today, there are over 100 performances per year at the

historic Capitol Theatre; the amazing establishment features live theatrical performances of SummerStage, world famous bands, dance programs, and classic silent and talking films; and

WHEREAS, The Capitol Arts Complex, a not-for-profit organization in Rome, New York, provides the community with artistic and cultural events of all spectrums; they host classic films at the Capitol Theatre, independent and foreign films at Cinema Capitol, the Rising Stars acting program for youth, SummerStage, and Capitolfest to strengthen Rome's Downtown Arts District; and

WHEREAS, The success of the Capitol Theatre is in direct correlation to the efforts of its leadership staff and supporters, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the theatre and the population it serves; and

WHEREAS, The arts are the building blocks of civilization; they are central to human expression; they enlighten us and inspire the imagination; educational institutions, individuals, and organizations which further such worthy purposes richly merit the recognition and appreciation of this Legislative Body and the people of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, As the Capitol Theatre looks back with great pride to its beginnings, viewing, with just satisfaction, its successful evolution, it renews both its dedication to supporting artistic excellence, and its commitment to the community it has served since 1928, expressing its appreciation to all those who have helped to sustain and enhance it over the years; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 95th Anniversary of the Capitol Theatre in Rome, New York on December 10, 2023; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Art Pierce, Executive Director, Capitol Theatre.