

Senate Resolution No. 688

BY: Senator KENNEDY

MOURNING the death of Shirley J. Hamilton,
President of the Niagara Falls Branch of the NAACP,
and longtime warrior for justice

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Shirley J. Hamilton of Niagara Falls, New York died on Sunday, March 26, 2023, at the age of 66; and

WHEREAS, Shirley J. Hamilton distinguished herself in her profession and by her sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of her community; and

WHEREAS, Born to the late James and Mary Hamilton, and raised in Niagara Falls, New York, Shirley J. Hamilton graduated from Niagara Falls High School, attended the SUNY at Buffalo for Electrical Engineering, Cornell University School of Labor Studies, and was a Licensed Practical Nurse; and

WHEREAS, Shirley J. Hamilton was a graduate of Elim Christian Fellowship through Northeastern Seminary, Sound of the Genuine, a graduate of Buffalo State College with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Justice, and a graduate of Northeastern Seminary with a Master of Science Degree in Theology and Social Justice; and

WHEREAS, She was employed at the New York State Power Authority (NYPA) Niagara Project, since 1979, and quickly rose through the ranks from a Seasonal Groundskeeper to be promoted as the first woman to work on the Ice Boom, the first woman Warehouse person at the Niagara Project and was once the only woman Senior Operator employed at NYPA throughout the entire State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Having the most seniority of any employee at the Niagara Project; she worked in every union classification in operations and had over 40 years of operational experience at the facility; and

WHEREAS, A born again Christian, she was a devout member of Elim Christian Fellowship, under the leadership of Bishop Troy Anthony Bronner; and

WHEREAS, She was the President of the Niagara Falls Branch of the NAACP, which hosted the 81st NYS NAACP Annual Conference Convention in 2017 in the City of Niagara Falls, for the first time in the history of the NAACP NYS Annual Conference; and

WHEREAS, An active member of the Niagara Falls community, Shirley J. Hamilton served as the Secretary to the Niagara County Workforce

Investment Act, Youth Council, the NYS Environmental Justice Inter-agency Task Force, the Environmental Justice Committee for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, Shirley J. Hamilton was the first woman and African American to Chair the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency; she also served on the Board of the Economic Development Group, was appointed by United States Senator Charles Schumer to the Niagara River Toxins Committee and the Lake Ontario Lakewide Management Planning Committee, and served on the board of the Buffalo/Niagara Mentorship Program; and

WHEREAS, Shirley J. Hamilton, in true selflessness and care for her community, was the former President of the Board of Directors of the Niagara Community Center Association, former Vice President of the Niagara/Orleans Labor Council, served on the Executive Board of the AFL-CIO Western New York Area Labor Federation, former Benefits Liaison for the IBEW Local 2104 at the NYPA Niagara Project, served on the Western New York Compensation Committee, member of the board of directors for the Western New York Council of Occupational Safety and Health (WNYCOSH), and was a member of the Niagara Falls Music Workshop Choir; and

WHEREAS, Expounding on the active involvement of Shirley J. Hamilton, she was additionally a member of Niagara County Commission on the Status of Women, served on the Committee to Build Strong Futures, Jobs 2000, was a member of the Niagara County Minority Advisory Committee, was the Assistant Coach for the Girls Basketball team at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, was a member of the Niagara Falls Wrestling Club, and was a former teacher of children's church at Trinity Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous awards and accolades, Shirley J. Hamilton received the Community Cares Service Award for Economic Development for Niagara County by former Wheatfield Town Supervisor, Timothy E. Demler, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Civil Rights Achievement Award, the AFL - CIO Earl A. Frampton Community Service Award, the National Coalition for Community And Justice (NCCJ) Sister/Brotherhood Award, the Every Woman Opportunity Award of Excellence, the Trinity Baptist Church Community Service Award, the Woman's Award of Excellence for Labor from former NYS Senator Antoine Thompson, the NAACP President's - Political Action Advocacy Award, the God's Woman "I Shall Wear a Crown" Award, and the Lion of Judah Award from Dominion Life Christian Center; and

WHEREAS, Shirley J. Hamilton's commitment to excellence, and her spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors, as a powerful voice and advocate for Civil Rights, Labor Rights, Environmental Justice, Social Justice, Justice for victims of police brutality, and was a strong advocate for quality education for children; and

WHEREAS, A devoted mother, sister, friend, confidante, and colleague, Shirley J. Hamilton will be missed by all of those who loved

her and were so fortunate enough to glean from her words of wisdom and work by her side in the continuing fight for racial justice and equality, perhaps most notably, by her two beloved children, James and Staisha; and

WHEREAS, It is the honor of this Legislative Body to celebrate the extraordinary life of this remarkable woman who devoted her life to the struggle for racial justice and equality for all; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Shirley J. Hamilton leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all she served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Shirley J. Hamilton, President of the Niagara Falls Branch of the NAACP, and longtime warrior for justice; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Shirley J. Hamilton.