

BY: M. of A. Hunter

MOURNING the death of Langston McKinney, Syracuse City Court judge, U.S. veteran, advocate, and valued member of his community

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Judge Langston McKinney, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Judge Langston McKinney distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, Judge Langston McKinney's commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Langston McKinney was born and raised in Miami, Florida and attended Howard University graduating in 1965; here, he completed a bachelor's degree in chemistry and was recruited to become the first Black scientist in the Research and Development Division at Carrier Corporation in Syracuse, where he worked until he enlisted in the U.S. Army and benefitted from the G.I. Bill to attend Syracuse University College of Law; and

WHEREAS, With an inherent desire to help others, Langston McKinney and a friend founded the Syracuse University Chapter of the Law Students Civil Rights Research Council (LSCRRRC) which ultimately allowed for him to help voters in Albany, Georgia fight voter suppression via an internship with the college organization before going on to graduate law school and work in legal aid, helping residents of a housing community develop a framework for tenant rights and giving legal assistance; and

WHEREAS, Langston McKinney worked at Onondaga Neighborhood Legal Services and then at the Frank H. Hiscock Legal Aid Society before going on to partner at his own law firm, Maye, McKinney & Melchor; he was one of four Black lawyers in Syracuse at the time, trailblazing the field of law and undoubtedly inspiring many others in his wake; and

WHEREAS, Appointed to his first term as judge on Syracuse City Court in 1986, Judge Langston McKinney brought a unique and informed perspective to the bench; he believed that judges bring the summation of their life experiences, both positive and negative, to their position of serving as a judge and he used this idea to advocate for fairer and more equitable ruling practices and considerations over the course of his over 24 years of experience in the role before retiring in 2011; and

WHEREAS, The naming of McKinney Manor, 18 buildings on 10 acres of land, is a small demonstration of the impact that 24 years as a city court judge has had on bestowing justice and care on others; and

WHEREAS, Leaving behind an impactful legacy, Judge Langston McKinney developed the Syracuse Community Treatment Court to provide treatment to defendant drug abusers facing nonviolent crimes as an alternative to jail, advocated for more inclusive representation on city juries, and spent countless hours working outside of the courtroom with youth and neighborhood groups, schools, churches, and nonprofit boards; and

WHEREAS, Judge McKinney is known for saying that justice is not contained to the courtroom, but is a community effort; it is an effort that is both long-lasting in the heart of the city and in the heart of its residents; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to reflect upon those outstanding individuals who have made everlasting contributions on behalf of their fellow citizens, and have truly left their mark on this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit, imbued with a sense of compassion, and comforted by a loving family, Judge Langston McKinney 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Judge Langston McKinney, Syracuse City Court judge, U.S. veteran, advocate, and valued member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Judge Langston McKinney.