

Assembly Resolution No. 2420

BY: M. of A. Buttenschon

PAYING tribute to the life and valiant service of retired Utica Fire Chief Russell E. Brooks II, a longtime, renowned, and dedicated public servant

WHEREAS, Citizens across our State and Nation are inspired by and indebted to our valiant firefighters who exhibit courage and bravery every day in the course of their duties; and

WHEREAS, Firefighters exemplify the power of human compassion and the strength of the American spirit through actions of the most heroic magnitude; their sacrifices and their selfless dedication merit tribute and recognition by all citizens of this great country; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Chief Russell E. Brooks II, who died on Sunday, June 2, 2024, at the age of 75, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Chief Russell E. Brooks II heroically performed, above and beyond the call of duty, those responsibilities which define the task of fire protection for 43 years as a member of the Utica Fire Department; he retired in 2018, after more than a decade as chief; and

WHEREAS, This extraordinary man dedicated his career to the residents of Utica, and put his life into making the Utica Fire Department the best in the country; with a larger-than-life personality, Chief Russell E. Brooks II guided the department through innovation and modernization; and

WHEREAS, Russell E. Brooks was an assistant fire chief at the department in 2001 when he and 11 other Utica firefighters were called to New York City on September 11th to provide a special camera manufactured in Utica for searching the rubble; a few years later, he developed a form of cancer, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, which was certified as a World Trade Center-related condition by the federal World Trade Center Health Program; and

WHEREAS, Chief Russell E. Brooks' legacy will live on in the namesake dedication of the Central Fire Station on Bleecker Street; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to his community, Russell E. Brooks was also a major contributor to several charities including his service as the head of the Utica Food Pantry, and his tireless efforts to help establish the Irish Cultural Center which opened in the Brewery District in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Chief Russell E. Brooks II is survived by his beloved wife, Marianne, and one son, as well as a legion of fellow firefighters and friends who will long cherish his memory; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his meritorious life, Chief Russell E. Brooks II touched many through his kindness and commitment to service, and, as we recall the loss of this great man, we memorialize his remarkable life and the enormous impact he had on everyone with whom he came in contact; and

WHEREAS, Chief Russell E. Brooks' infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through his family's vivid and happy memories; his insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives he touched; 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 pay tribute to the life and valiant service of Chief Russell E. Brooks II, 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 retired Utica Fire Chief Russell E. Brooks II.