

Assembly Resolution No. 56

BY: M. of A. Paulin

MOURNING the death of Joan Pantanelli, meritorious veteran, distinguished citizen, and devoted member of her community

WHEREAS, There are certain outstanding members of our community who, through their selfless commitment and dedication, have served to better the quality of life in our community and have had a measurable positive impact on the lives of its residents; Joan Pantanelli was one such individual; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Joan Pantanelli, noting the significance of her purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Joan "Johnnie" Pantanelli, of White Plains, New York, died on Saturday, January 14, 2023, at the age of 97; and

WHEREAS, Born on March 1, 1925, Joan Adkins grew up in Scarsdale, New York, where she graduated from high school in 1943; she went on to study aeronautical engineering at New York University (NYU), before briefly working for General Electric manufacturing BA-10 motors which operated bomb-bay doors on bombers for the war; and

WHEREAS, From a young age, Joan Adkins had a love for motorcycles and airplanes; she was a member of the Motor Maids of America, and met her future husband at the motorcycle shop in White Plains, where he was a mechanic; and

WHEREAS, In 1944, with World War II in full swing, Joan Adkins joined the United States Marine Corps Reserves and Civil Air Patrol, where she helped with reconnaissance missions, searching for German submarines off the East Coast; this earned her the prestigious Congressional Gold Medal; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of her military service, Joan Adkins spent her weekdays working at the Warwick Country Club; determined to fly airplanes, she used her wages and tips to rent an airplane on the weekends so she could learn to fly; she received her pilot's license in 1947; and

WHEREAS, The former Joan Adkins and John Pantanelli were united in marriage on June 7, 1952, during which time the couple moved to White Plains, New York, before welcoming their son, John-Pierre Pantanelli, in 1956; and

WHEREAS, Joan Pantanelli and her husband owned a motorcycle shop, which they eventually closed to open their scaffolding company, Swing Staging Inc., in New York City; after her husband passed away in 1987, Johnnie's son took over management, and the two of them worked together to run the company for more than 40 years; and

WHEREAS, Well into her 80s and 90s, Joan Pantanelli made the commute to the city to work alongside her son; early on, her no-nonsense attitude earned her the job of making collection calls, but she was later known for making sure the office supplies were ordered and the candy dish was always full; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, under her able leadership, Swing Staging grew to become one of the largest privately-owned suspended-scaffolding companies in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Outside of work, Joan Pantanelli maintained an unwavering commitment to Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and the Northeast Composite Squadron, where she most cherished working with the cadets; as one of its longest serving members, the squadron she commanded was renamed the Colonel Johnnie Pantanelli Composite Squadron and she earned the grade of Colonel in May of 2011; she faithfully attended weekly meetings until November 11, 2022; and

WHEREAS, In addition to being presented the Congressional Gold Medal during the 2015 New York Wing Conference, this extraordinarily selfless woman was awarded CAP's Bronze Medal of Valor in recognition of her heroic efforts after she pulled an unconscious man from a burning car, saving his life; and

WHEREAS, A guitarist and singer, Joan Pantanelli was never one to shy away from a microphone; as a devout Catholic, she sang baritone in the Church choir for over 50 years at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, where she was also a member of the Ladies Guild which focused on charitable community outreach; and

WHEREAS, Joan Pantanelli's son and grandchildren knew her for her generosity, incredibly sharp mind, matter-of-fact persona, and love of family gatherings around the holidays; she loved to sing "Be Not Afraid" and "Amazing Grace" with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren; she banged pots and pans on her front porch to ring in the New Year, and loved to toast with a glass of Reisling, on ice; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by her husband, John Pantanelli; mother, Augustine Theall; father, George Adkins Sr.; brother, George Adkins; and adoptive father, Walter Theall; Joan Pantanelli is survived by her half-sister, Patricia Theall; son, John-Pierre Pantanelli (Sonya); and her four grandchildren Seth, Michaelangelo and Rafaello Pantanelli, and Lia Barberis; as well as four great grandchildren, Amelia and Gwen Pantanelli, and Ariana and Preston Barberis; and

WHEREAS, Joan Pantanelli's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through her family's vivid and happy memories; her insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives she touched; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Joan Pantanelli leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all

who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing woman; she 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 mourn the death of Joan Pantanelli, and to express its deepest condolences to her family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Joan Pantanelli.