

Assembly Resolution No. 851

BY: M. of A. Norris

HONORING Heidi and Douglas Kohler upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of the Educators of the Year Award by the Clarence Chamber of Commerce on March 21, 2024

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those distinguished citizens who would devote their life's work and purpose to community service, contributing to the welfare of the citizens of their communities and this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, their Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Heidi and Douglas Kohler upon the occasion of their special designation as recipients of the Educators of the Year Award by the Clarence Chamber of Commerce, to be celebrated at its Annual Awards Gala on Thursday, March 21, 2024, at Samuel's Grande Manor in Clarence, New York; and

WHEREAS, Heidi and Douglas Kohler were nominated for this prestigious award for their steadfast and unremitting commitment to their beloved community of Clarence Center, New York; and

WHEREAS, Heidi and Douglas have both spent their entire teaching career in Clarence, with Doug joining the staff of Clarence Middle School in the fall of 1989, and Heidi becoming a faculty member in 2000; during their tenure, the couple has worked hard to create opportunities for students in the classroom as well as through the numerous extracurricular activities that they have been involved in creating and leading; and

WHEREAS, A graduate of the Clarence Central School District, Douglas gained a love of local history through his teaching with Barb Gilmour, always focusing on engaging his students in the history of the community; and

WHEREAS, During the Clarence Bicentennial, Douglas Kohler authored a series of four books that highlighted the town's 200-year history; in addition to the books, he has written numerous articles for **Western New York Heritage Magazine**; and

WHEREAS, While serving on the Board of Trustees for the Clarence Historical Society and The Hull Family Home and Farmstead, he was an integral part of the Hull House History Camp for which he continues to volunteer; and

WHEREAS, Through his hard work and depth of knowledge, Douglas Kohler became the Erie County Historian in 2009, the position he proudly holds currently; and

WHEREAS, Douglas Kohler is currently working with PBS on a video

series for 4th to 8th grade students which highlights the history of WNY, and also serves on a consortium of historians planning the Erie Canal Bicentennial commemoration that will take place in 2025; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, dedicated to providing a wealth of opportunities to his students, Douglas Kohler helped to create the women's lacrosse program at Clarence High School, where he coached at the Varsity level for 20 years; his teams compiled multiple section championships, several all-American selections, and an appearance in the state final four; in the past, he also coached Modified Field Hockey and Modified Soccer; and

WHEREAS, Heidi Kohler began her illustrious teaching career at Clarence as a student-teacher of 6th grade social studies; after completing her master's degree in Music Education, she secured a choir position at the middle school; and

WHEREAS, During her time at Clarence, Heidi Kohler has taught every grade level of chorus and general music classes, as well as created many new choral opportunities for students, including Treble Choir, Guys' Choir, Summer Voice Lesson for middle school students, and the Summer Theater Workshop; she has served on countless committees and helped to spearhead integral parts of the middle school culture, such as Sixth Grade Orientation, and multiple academic and leadership committees, and has mentored nearly 20 teachers both informally and formally; and

WHEREAS, Together, Heidi and Douglas Kohler have directed over 25 musicals and collaborated on events such as the History Alive! Concert Series, field trips and various leadership committees; to provide more opportunities for students to be on stage, they created the Clarence Summer Theatre Workshop in 2019, alongside their production staff; during the workshop, rising 6th through 9th grade students mount a full-scale production over a two-week period through attending workshops led by high schoolers and the musical production staff; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to restore normalcy to students who had been isolated during the closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, Heidi and Douglas Kohler adapted to the circumstance and created two smaller-than-normal casts, distanced the actors on-stage, and streamed the performances for families to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Heidi and Douglas Kohler upon the occasion of their designation as recipients of the Educators of the Year Award by the Clarence Chamber of Commerce on March 21, 2024; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Heidi and Douglas Kohler.

