

BY: Senator SCARCELLA-SPANTON

MOURNING the death of Margaret D. Williams,
legendary vocalist and community leader

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; Margaret D. Williams was one such individual; and

WHEREAS, With profound sorrow and deep regret, this Legislative Body records the passing of Margaret D. Williams, a beloved resident of Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York, who died on January 23, 2026, at the age of 83; and

WHEREAS, Margaret D. (Ross) Williams was born on July 19, 1942, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to Mary Ross and John Porter, and moved to Brooklyn, New York, as a teenager, where she would establish deep roots and a lifelong connection to the Coney Island community; and

WHEREAS, While attending high school in Brooklyn, Margaret became actively involved in music programs, nurturing a passion and talent that would define her extraordinary life; and

WHEREAS, As a young adult in the late 1950s, Margaret D. Williams joined the renowned girl group The Cookies, alongside Earl-Jean McCrea and Dorothy Jones, becoming an integral part of one of the most influential vocal groups of the doo-wop and Brill Building eras; and

WHEREAS, The Cookies achieved national and international success, recording and performing songs written by legendary songwriters such as Carole King and Gerry Goffin, and collaborating with iconic artists including Neil Sedaka, Mel Torme, Little Eva, and others; and

WHEREAS, Their hit recordings, including "Chains" and "Don't Say Nothin'," reached the Billboard Top 40 charts in the 1960s, with "Chains" later recorded by The Beatles on their 1963 debut album, Please Please Me, further cementing the group's enduring influence on popular music; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of their significant contributions to American music, The Cookies were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2002 in Cleveland, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, Margaret D. Williams continued to preserve and celebrate The Cookies' legacy for decades thereafter, performing in concerts throughout the United States, Europe, and Spain until her passing; and

WHEREAS, After years of touring, Margaret D. Williams returned to Coney Island, where she remained deeply engaged in her community, continuing to sing professionally and dedicating her voice to sacred

music as a devoted member of the Coney Island Gospel Assembly Church on Neptune Avenue, where she sang in the choir and volunteered her talents for church events, activities, and funerals; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, she was a dedicated public servant, retiring after 33 years of service with the New York City Department of Health, Prison Health Services, and an active member of Union DC37, Chapter 1549; and

WHEREAS, Margaret D. Williams was a cherished participant and supporter of the Coney Island History Project, sharing her personal history and experiences in a 2004 interview, and proudly cutting the ribbon to open the Boardwalk Memory Booth in 2005; and

WHEREAS, Margaret D. Williams was predeceased by her husband, Ronnie Williams, and her mother, Mary Ross; she is survived by her loving children, Anthony and Joe Williams; her grandchildren, Jasmine, Jade, and Anthony Jr.; her great-grandchildren; her sister, Ella Brown; and her brothers, Milas Ross and Pete Jackson, all of whom cherish her memory and celebrate a life marked by faith, service, music, and love; and

WHEREAS, Margaret D. Williams will be remembered as a trailblazing artist, devoted public servant, faithful church member, and a pillar of the Coney Island community whose voice uplifted generations and whose legacy will endure; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Margaret D. Williams, and to extend its deepest condolences to her family, friends, and all who were touched by her remarkable life; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Margaret D. Williams.