

Senate Resolution No. 1813

BY: Senator PARKER

COMMENDING the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College upon the occasion of hosting its 18th National Black Writers Conference on March 25-28, 2026, and recognizing Kassahun Checole as recipient of the Margaret T. Burroughs Institution Building Award

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and celebrate events and institutions that advance literature, scholarship, and the preservation of Black cultural heritage, thereby enriching the intellectual and artistic life of our communities and our nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College upon the occasion of hosting its 18th National Black Writers Conference on March 25-28, 2026, at Medgar Evers College, City University of New York; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Black Literature, founded by Dr. Brenda M. Greene, is the only center in the nation devoted exclusively to expanding and enriching public knowledge and appreciation of literature produced by people of the African diaspora, and serves as an essential forum for discussion, research, and critical analysis while nurturing generations of writers, scholars, and literary advocates; and

WHEREAS, The National Black Writers Conference, founded in 1986 by novelist John Oliver Killens at Medgar Evers College, has for nearly four decades convened thousands of writers, readers, scholars, and lovers of Black literature from across the United States and around the world, and has featured such distinguished participants as Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Nikki Giovanni, and Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott; and

WHEREAS, The Conference continues its tradition of excellence by recognizing individuals whose work strengthens literary and cultural institutions, including Kassahun Checole, President and Publisher of Africa World Press, Inc. and The Red Sea Press, Inc., who will receive the Margaret T. Burroughs Institution Building Award; and

WHEREAS, The Margaret T. Burroughs Institution Building Award, named in honor of the renowned artist, educator, and founder of the DuSable Museum of African American History, recognizes those whose work sustains and strengthens the institutions upon which African diasporic culture and scholarship depend; and

WHEREAS, Kassahun Checole has made extraordinary contributions to African and African diasporic publishing, having founded Africa World Press in 1983 and The Red Sea Press in 1985, and publishing thousands of titles in more than 20 languages, amplifying the voices of African and diasporic writers; and

WHEREAS, The 18th National Black Writers Conference stands as a vital and enduring gathering that celebrates the richness, diversity, and global impact of Black literature, fosters meaningful dialogue among writers and scholars, and continues to advance the mission of preserving and promoting the literary traditions of the African diaspora; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College upon the occasion of hosting its 18th National Black Writers Conference, and to celebrate its enduring mission of expanding, preserving, and uplifting the literary traditions of the African diaspora; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body further recognizes Kassahun Checole upon the occasion of his receipt of the Margaret T. Burroughs Institution Building Award, and extends its heartfelt congratulations and deepest appreciation for his enduring contributions to literature and the amplification of African and diasporic voices; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Center for Black Literature, Medgar Evers College; and to Kassahun Checole as a token of the esteem and high regard of this Legislative Body.