

Senate Resolution No. 932

BY: Senator MAY

MOURNING the death of Van B. Robinson, distinguished citizen, respected trailblazer and Syracuse politician, and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Van B. Robinson of Syracuse, New York, died on Saturday, May 3, 2025, at the age of 87; and

WHEREAS, Van B. Robinson distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, A resident of Syracuse for 57 years, Van B. Robinson lived a passionate life of service to others, beginning his legacy by helping to revive the Syracuse NAACP, where he held the esteemed roles of vice president and president; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, Van B. Robinson joined the Syracuse Common Council where he filled a vacant seat; he later successfully ran for election to the same seat and was subsequently elected president of the council for four-year terms each in 2009 and 2013, being the first Black politician to hold the respected position; and

WHEREAS, Van B. Robinson also helped establish the New York State Fair's Pan-African Village and was one of the first city politicians to call for the removal of Interstate 81 viaduct that impacted Syracuse's 15th ward when it was built in the early 1960s; his legacy of inspired vision and unwavering determination to foster a unified community in all facets of his work will long endure, undoubtedly inspiring countless New Yorkers for decades to come; and

WHEREAS, Out of respect and reverence for Van B. Robinson's myriad accomplishments and renowned leadership, a room where lawmakers debated and voted upon thousands of resolutions and laws was renamed in his honor to the Van B. Robinson Common Council Chambers; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous awards and accolades, Van B. Robinson received a commendation from AIA (American Institute of Architects) of Central New York, a Proclamation for Service - NYS Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli Deputy Chief, Herman Edge Award, Citizens for a Crime Free Community Award, Post Standard Achievement Award, International Masons Citizens Award, NAACP Freedom Award, OMEGA PSI-PHI Citizen of The Year Award, Benjamin Banneker Democratic Club Achievement Award, Fort Drum Appreciation Award, NYS Council of Black Democrats Appreciation Award, and is a 2021 InterFaith Leadership Award recipient,

among many other notable civic and community acknowledgements; and

WHEREAS, In his earlier life, Van B. Robinson enjoyed playing golf, reading, and traveling both domestically and internationally, visiting the Caribbean, the Panama Canal region, South Pacific Islands, Australia, and New Zealand; he was also prideful of having the great privilege of playing golf with former U.S. President Bill Clinton; and

WHEREAS, Van B. Robinson's commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Van B. Robinson is survived by his wife, Linda; children, Donetta and Van E.; grandchildren, Jackie, Jovan, and Claude; and great grandson Jovan Jr.; and

WHEREAS, In grateful recognition of a life devoted to public service, this Legislative Body seeks to honor the enduring legacy of a man who led with integrity, served with unwavering loyalty, and always sought to bring people together; his steadfast commitment to unity and his deep respect for all those he represented earned him the admiration of his peers and the lasting respect of his community; Van B. Robinson will be remembered not only for what he accomplished, but for the honorable way in which he served; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Van B. Robinson leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Van B. Robinson, distinguished citizen, respected trailblazer and Syracuse politician, and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Van B. Robinson.