

BY: M. of A. Friend

COMMEMORATING the 100th Anniversary of the
Clemens Center in Elmira, New York on May 10, 2025

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to those institutions and organizations whose commitment to promoting the richness and diversity of the arts and entertainment world has contributed to the strength, vitality, and cultural enrichment of their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Clemens Center in Elmira, New York on Saturday, May 10, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Located in the central Southern Tier of New York State, the Clemens Center is the region's premier performing arts center with two spectacular performance spaces: Mandeville Hall, a flexible "black box" venue suitable for intimate performances, and the majestic Powers Theater, an architectural treasure that has been restored to its vaudevillian-era grandeur; and

WHEREAS, The Clemens Center started as the Keeney Theater, which first opened its doors on December 21, 1925, as a 2,500-seat vaudeville and silent film house that featured opulent murals, opera boxes and chandeliers; and

WHEREAS, The Keeney Theater was wrought with catastrophe when it was flooded in 1946, when the Chemung River overflowed its banks, and then again in 1972 during Hurricane Agnes; and

WHEREAS, The Clemens Center was officially formed in 1975 after the building was targeted for demolition to accommodate a new highway; and

WHEREAS, A citizens group raised \$750,000 in 1976 to save the Clemens Center and upgrade the facility which was able to present its first performance in 1977; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, the 2,500-square foot Mandeville Hall was added as an intimate multi-use theater; and

WHEREAS, Since 1995, when a Facilities Master Plan was created, the Clemens Center has been consistently updated and maintained to become a valuable asset to the community; and

WHEREAS, The Clemens Center annually leases performance space to more than 55 tenants, including the following performing arts organizations: Elmira Little Theatre, The Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, Rafael Grigorian Ballet Theatre, Common Time and New Heights Dance Theater; and

WHEREAS, Programming at the Clemens Center reflects the diverse interests of audiences around the region whose lives are enriched by music, dance, theater, comedy and more; and

WHEREAS, The Clemens Center contributes to the cultural richness of Chemung County, New York by offering school programs, subsidized facility rentals and other support programs that help thousands each year; and

WHEREAS, A vibrant arts community encourages collaboration, instills local pride, draws people together, and is essential to a community's vitality; since its inception, the Clemens Center has greatly contributed to the richness of New York's cultural palette and remains steadfastly dedicated to ensuring this gem remains in all its glory for decades to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Clemens Center in Elmira, New York on May 10, 2025; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Clemens Center.