Assembly Resolution No. 737

BY: M. of A. Miller

COMMEMORATING the 125th Anniversary of the publication of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" and celebrating the enduring legacy of its author, L. Frank Baum

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and celebrate literary milestones that have had a profound impact on American culture, imagination, and identity; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the publication of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," a beloved American fantasy classic authored by L. Frank Baum and published in the year 1900, to be celebrated at the Annual Oz-Stravaganza Festival in the Village of Chittenango, New York-held the weekend of the first Saturday in June and recognized as the largest and longest-running Wizard of Oz-themed celebration in the world-which honors Baum's life and legacy in his birthplace; and

WHEREAS, Lyman Frank Baum (1856-1919), the visionary author of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," was born in the Village of Chittenango, nestled in Madison County just outside Syracuse, New York-a community that proudly preserves and celebrates his enduring legacy to this day; and

WHEREAS, "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" is widely recognized as the first American fantasy novel to achieve immediate and lasting popular success upon publication, captivating the hearts and minds of readers of all ages with its imaginative storytelling, vibrant characters, and universal themes; and

WHEREAS, The book introduced readers to Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, the Cowardly Lion, Glinda the Good Witch, and the Wicked Witch of the West-characters who continue to inspire generations through books, film, theater, and other creative works; and

WHEREAS, L. Frank Baum, a financially struggling businessman and devoted father of four, was encouraged by his mother-in-law to put his imaginative nursery rhymes and stories to paper, leading to his first publications "Mother Goose in Prose" (1897) and "Father Goose: His Book" (1899); and

WHEREAS, Working in collaboration with Chicago artist William Wallace Denslow, L. Frank Baum published "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" in 1900, launching a beloved literary universe that grew to encompass 14 books, including "The Marvelous Land of Oz" (1904) and "Glinda of Oz" (1920), published posthumously; and

WHEREAS, The story's iconic adaptation into the 1939 MGM film "The Wizard of Oz" solidified its status as a cornerstone of American popular culture, later expanded by Broadway's "The Wiz," the theatrical phenomenon "Wicked," and a growing Oz universe that continues to evolve;

and

WHEREAS, Chittenango, New York, the birthplace of L. Frank Baum, honors his legacy each year with the internationally renowned Oz-Stravaganza Festival, the largest and longest-running Wizard of Oz-themed celebration in the world; and

WHEREAS, Taking place the weekend of June 6-8, 2025, the 2025 Oz-Stravaganza will celebrate the theme Ease on Down the Wicked Road, marking the 50th Anniversary of "The Wiz" and the 30th Anniversary of "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West," bringing fans from across the globe to experience the magic of Oz; and

WHEREAS, The Oz-Stravaganza Festival features parades, contests, entertainment, shopping, games, and special guests from the expansive Oz universe, keeping alive the spirit of Baum's imagination and ensuring the magic of Oz continues to inspire future generations; and

WHEREAS, The phrase "There's no place like home" remains a timeless reflection of the human heart, and for fans of Oz, Chittenango is indeed that home-a place where the Yellow Brick Road begins, and where the memory of L. Frank Baum lives on; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," to honor the legacy of author L. Frank Baum of Chittenango, New York, and to celebrate the vibrant cultural tradition carried forth through the Annual Oz-Stravaganza Festival; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the International L. Frank Baum & All Things Oz Historical Foundation that organizes the Oz-Stravaganza Festival and to the Village of Chittenango in recognition of its important place in literary and cultural history.