Assembly Resolution No. 755

BY: M. of A. Lupardo

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of Kampai Japanese Steakhouse of Vestal, New York, on December 19, 2025

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize the achievements of those individuals and businesses that contribute substantially to the economic vitality of their communities, thereby enhancing the economic well-being of the entire Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Kampai Japanese Steakhouse on December 19, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Kampai Japanese Steakhouse is a longtime local favorite in Vestal, known for its lively hibachi dinners, fresh sushi, and entertaining tableside chefs; serving the community since December 19, 1975, Kampai offers a unique dining experience that blends flavor, flair, and tradition; and

WHEREAS, The story begins back in the 1970's when Ryoichi "Richard" Matsushima, a first-generation immigrant from Himeji, Japan, arrived in New York City and met a restaurant owner named Sato, a meeting that changed his life; and

WHEREAS, One day, Sato asked Richard Matsushima if he would help in the restaurant on the weekend; before long, he was Maitre d'; this launched his restaurant career; and

WHEREAS, Richard Matsushima moved to Vestal, New York, and opened Kampai, Vestal's first hibachi restaurant, in 1975 when he was only 20 years old; he began with hibachi grills, featuring Japanese chefs simultaneously cooking, chatting with customers, and providing entertainment; ten years later, he introduced Sushi to the community, finding the right chef, arranging for shipments of the best quality fish available, and importing unique products from Japan; and

WHEREAS, Richard Matsushima's life did not center on just the restaurant; he has always been a strong believer in family; as his three children, Michael, Andrew, and Katherine, were growing up, he always made it a point to be home for dinner even if it meant leaving the restaurant to do so; and

WHEREAS, That commitment to family extends to all of the loyal Kampai staff, some of whom have been with the restaurant for years, including a couple of brothers, a father and son, and brother and sister; that feeling of family extends to the loyal cadre of customers, now serving the fourth generation in some families; it is no surprise that sons, Michael and Andrew, are active in the business, and their sister, Katherine, is also in the hospitality business in Barcelona,

Spain; and

WHEREAS, Kampai Japanese Steakhouse is the first Japanese restaurant in the Southern Tier and one of the oldest operating in Upstate New York; today, Kampai has been passed down to the next generation and is owned and operated by Richard Matsushima's sons, Michael and Andrew; the name Kampai comes from the word "cheers," or more literally, "bottoms up," in the Japanese language; and

WHEREAS, For 50 years, Kampai Japanese Steakhouse has been a place to celebrate countless birthdays, anniversaries, and even engagements; it is a pleasure for the Matsushima family to host these special life events for their patrons; as you enter the restaurant, which is inspired by Japanese philosophy and aesthetics, you are transported to Japan; Kampai has its own unique culture and traditions, and there is no place quite like it; and

WHEREAS, Richard Matsushima, the subject of a new award-winning documentary, says his mission in life is to teach others and spread kindness, and he hopes the film spreads a positive message; Kampai's founder is known for his kind personality and commitment to hard work; and

WHEREAS, The success of Kampai Japanese Steakhouse began with family and the guidelines, which were implemented by Richard Matsushima 50 years ago, where his personal family, his employee family, and his customer family are all valued and respected; the Matsushima family is committed to continuing the tradition that has thrived since 1975; and

WHEREAS, The progression of Kampai Japanese Steakhouse is in direct correlation to the efforts of the Matsushima family and their employees, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the business and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is with immense pride that the hard-working and dedicated staff members of Kampai Japanese Steakhouse, past and present, celebrate this milestone 50th Anniversary and anticipate many more years of success for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, It is with great pleasure that this Legislative Body acknowledges this exceptional business, its contributions to the local and state economies, and its vibrant role in improving the quality of life in its community, fully confident that it will continue to enjoy the outstanding success it has experienced thus far; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Kampai Japanese Steakhouse; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Matsushima family, owners of Kampai Japanese

Steakhouse.