

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of legendary radio personality  
Harold Baron Jackson

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to those individuals whose commitment and creative talents have contributed to the entertainment and cultural enrichment of their community and the entire State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Harold "Hal" Jackson died on Wednesday, May 23, 2012, at the age of 96; and

WHEREAS, Hal Jackson was born the son of Eugene Baron Jackson and Laura (Rivers) Jackson on November 3, 1915, in Charleston, South Carolina; he grew up in Washington, D.C. where he was educated at Howard University; and

WHEREAS, Hal Jackson began his broadcasting career as the first African-American radio sports announcer, broadcasting Howard's home baseball games and local Negro league baseball games; in 1939, he became the first African-American host at WINX/Washington with "The Bronze Review", a nightly interview program; and

WHEREAS, Hal Jackson later hosted a talk show, and a program of jazz and blues on WOOK-TV; he moved to New York in 1954 and became the first radio personality to broadcast three daily shows on three different New York stations; four million listeners tuned in nightly to hear his mix of music and conversations with jazz and show business celebrities; and

WHEREAS, In 1971, Hal Jackson and the late Percy Sutton, a former Manhattan borough president, co-founded the Inner City Broadcasting Corporation (ICBC), which acquired WLIB, becoming the first African-American owned and operated station in New York; and

WHEREAS, The following year, ICBC acquired WLIB-FM, changing its call letters to WBLS "the total Black experience in Sound"; today, ICBC where Hal Jackson was group chairman, owns and operates stations in New York City, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, as well as in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Columbia, South Carolina, and Jackson, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Hal Jackson spent a lifetime breaking down barriers; during the 1940s and 1950s when racial segregation was prevalent, his pioneering efforts in radio and television opened doors for other African-American broadcasters; he became an advocate for teens in the 1960s, producing the Black Teenage America contest, and was a supporter of Black-owned businesses beginning in the 1970s, when he joined ICBC; and

WHEREAS, Hal Jackson not only made sure that the struggle for Black equality was broadcast over America's publicly owned airwaves, but also disseminated the glories of African-American attainment far and wide by interviewing luminaries like Dr. Charles Drew who discovered blood plasma; Mary McCloud Bethune, advisor to President Roosevelt and Founder of the National Council of Negro Women; Harlem's first Congressman Adam Clayton Powell; Harlem's Joe Louis the "Brown Bomber" who crushed the Nazi's theory of white supremacy; and Harlem's eminent composer Duke Ellington; in addition, Hal Jackson employed his radio programs to promote and preserve awareness of R&B classics; and

WHEREAS, Hal Jackson, our leader, our champion, our friend and our advocate, was also a husband to his widow, the lovely Mrs. Deborah (Debi B.) Jackson, co-host of their radio show "Sunday Classics"; a father to his eldest daughter, Jane Jackson Harley, a concert promoter in Washington, D.C; his son, Judge Harold B. Jackson, Jr. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; his daughter, Jewell Jackson McCabe, a business woman in New York City and a founder of the vital organization, 100 Black Women; and his daughter,

Tonya Gray; Mr. Jackson was also a grandfather to six grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, Hal Jackson was the first minority member inducted into the National Association of Broadcaster's Hall of Fame; in 1995, he became the first African-American inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame, and was given a Pioneer Award by the Rhythm and Blues Foundation in 2003; furthermore, in October 2010, he was named a "Giant in Broadcasting" by the Library of American Broadcasting; and

WHEREAS, Being a true asset to society, Hal Jackson was the founder of the Hal Jackson Talented Teens Miss International Competition where for over 39 years he served as Executive Producer and Host of the contest; and

WHEREAS, During his lifetime, Hal Jackson was honored by Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy; because of his access to the airwaves, Hal Jackson was instrumental in stimulating the initial movement for the 6.5 million signatures solicited on petitions and letters submitted to Representatives John Conyers and Shirley Chisholm on behalf of creating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday; and

WHEREAS, Hal Jackson distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Hal Jackson 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 legendary radio personality Harold Baron Jackson; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Harold Baron Jackson.