

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of paramount novelist Chinua Achebe, founder and pioneer of African literature

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to the lives of those esteemed individuals of international renown who distinguished themselves through their life's work; and

WHEREAS, Foremost novelist, Professor Chinua Achebe, died on Thursday, March 21, 2013, at the age of 82; and

WHEREAS, Born Albert Chinualumogu Achebe, on November 16, 1930, Chinua Achebe was a Nigerian novelist, poet, professor, and critic; he was best known for his 1958 novel, THINGS FALL APART, selling over 12 million copies around the world, and having been translated into 50 languages, making him the most paraphrased African writer of all time; and

WHEREAS, Raised by his parents in the Igbo town of Ogidi in southeastern Nigeria, Chinua Achebe excelled academically and earned a scholarship for undergraduate studies; he became fascinated with world religions and traditional African cultures, and began writing stories as a college student; and

WHEREAS, After graduation, Chinua Achebe worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) and soon moved to the metropolis of Lagos; he gained worldwide attention for THINGS FALL APART; his later novels include: NO LONGER AT EASE (1960), ARROW OF GOD (1964), A MAN OF THE PEOPLE (1966), and ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH (1987); and

WHEREAS, When the region of Biafra broke away from Nigeria in 1967, Chinua Achebe became a supporter of Biafran independence and acted as ambassador for the people of the new nation; the war ravaged the populace, and as starvation and violence took its toll, he appealed to the people of Europe and the Americas for assistance; and

WHEREAS, When the Nigerian government retook the region in 1970, Chinua Achebe involved himself in political parties, but soon resigned due to frustration over the corruption and elitism he witnessed, thereby deciding to devote himself to academia; he lived in the United States for several years in the 1970s, and returned there in 1990 after a car accident left him partially disabled; and

WHEREAS, Chinua Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of Western and traditional African values during and after the colonial era; his style relies heavily on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk stories, proverbs, and oratory; he also published a number of short stories, children's books, and essay collections; and

WHEREAS, A David and Marianna Fisher University Professor and Professor of Africana Studies at Brown University, Chinua Achebe worked up until the time of his death; and

WHEREAS, New York's Bard College, with a distinguished history of supporting Chinua Achebe's work and legacy, will continue to be a primary home for his projects; and

WHEREAS, Professor Achebe's global significance lies not only in his talent and recognition as a writer, but also as a critical thinker and essayist who has written extensively on questions of the role of culture in Africa along with the social and political significance of aesthetics and analysis of the postcolonial state in Africa; and

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

WHEREAS, Chinua Achebe's commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Chinua Achebe is survived by his wife, Christie, their children, Chinelo, Ikechukwu, Chidi, and Nwando as well as his grandchildren, Chochi, Chino, Chidera, C.J. (Chinua Jr.), Nnamdi and Zeal; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Chinua Achebe 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 paramount novelist Chinua Achebe, founder and pioneer of African literature; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Chinua Achebe.