

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION celebrating the life and creative talents of Judith Iris Martin, one of the founders of the Paper Bag Players

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to celebrate the life and creative talents of Judy Martin, one of the founders of the Paper Bag Players; and

WHEREAS, Judith "Judy" Iris Martin of Mineola, New York, passed away in July of 2012 at the age of 93; and

WHEREAS, Her legacy and dedication to children's theater lives on with the Paper Bag Players, a troupe based on Manhattan's Lower East Side at 185 East Broadway; the troupe's long history of intelligent and imaginative children's theater continues to reaffirm the Lower East Side as a hub of artistic creativity; and

WHEREAS, Judy Martin was born on August 13, 1918, in Newark, New Jersey to Russian immigrants; she traveled to Manhattan for theater and dance lessons, and eventually studied under the renowned actress Maria Ouspenskaya at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater; and

WHEREAS, As a young woman, Judy Martin performed with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and assisted in managing the dance project for the National Youth Administration, a New Deal agency; additionally, she taught theater to disadvantaged children in settlement houses in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Judy Martin would distinguish herself in her profession as founder and artistic director of the Paper Bag Players, a renowned non-profit theater company of adults which performs original, contemporary, musical theater for children; and

WHEREAS, In 1958, Judy and her friends developed the idea for the Paper Bag Players as an improvisational theater group with a focus on performing street humor for children; they began by putting on shows for the children of the staff of the Living Theater, and soon expanded to the general public; and

WHEREAS, Judy Martin served admirably as Artistic Director, basing the group's performances on a child's everyday experiences, and combining short plays, rousing songs, freewheeling dances and audience participation; the troupe became known for their use of common household objects, cardboard boxes and brown craft paper brightened with splashes of color in their stage design; and

WHEREAS, For 51 years, this esteemed woman played a pivotal role in the Paper Bag Players, embodying their unique style through her contributions as writer, designer, creative director and actress; she was an essential part of more than 35 shows with the Players which were seen by five million people; and

WHEREAS, Under Judy Martin's tenure, the Players grew in popularity and became one of the first children's theater groups to appear on educational television; they received support from the National Endowment for the Arts and received many awards, including three from the American Theater Wing; and

WHEREAS, Although the Paper Bag Players toured the nation and the world introducing children to theater under Judy Martin's leadership, the theater company remains true to its roots by continuing to perform on the Lower East Side; The Paper Bag Players continue to spark children's interest in theater by partnering with Lower East Side insti-

tutions such as Henry Street Settlement and the neighborhood's local libraries; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by her husband, Solomon Miller, she is survived by her daughter and two grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Judy Martin leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all she served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life and creative talents of Judith Iris Martin, one of the founders of the Paper Bag Players; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Judith Iris Martin.