

BY: Senator BONACIC

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of the
University Police of the State University of New
York

WHEREAS, The quality of life in New York State is largely reflective of the commitment and dedication demonstrated by members of the agencies which serve to protect, preserve and maintain public order; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished citizens who devote their life's work and purpose to public service, contributing to the care and welfare of the citizens of the State of New York; 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 the University Police of the State University of New York; and

WHEREAS, The brave men and women of the University Police have tirelessly worked to make our SUNY campuses safe for academic, social and research endeavors since its inception in 1968; and

WHEREAS, The development of the University Police evolved over time, beginning with a security model and transitioning to full service policing; today, University Police departments are found at 29 locations staffed by more than 600 sworn personnel; and

WHEREAS, From 1948 to roughly 1960, SUNY law enforcement consisted of campus safety departments that worked with local police departments to deal with criminal matters; the main mission of these departments was to provide general security and fire prevention services, and enforce parking regulations; and

WHEREAS, By 1958, the Board of Trustees created the job title of Institutional Patrolman, who had the legal title of Special Policemen through the New York State Education Law; these policemen were designated as peace officers and could make arrests for felony and misdemeanor offenses, and could issue traffic summonses within the geographical confines of the campus; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, the New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Crime undertook a study to review campus security operations on State University campuses and recommended the creation of a law enforcement department on campus under university control; and

WHEREAS, Platt Harris, a retired member of the New York State Police, was appointed Coordinator and eventually Director of SUNY Campus Security Operations in 1969, and charged to create a law enforcement program; and

WHEREAS, During the 1970s, various initiatives were completed under the leadership of Director Harris including the first civil service entrance examination for campus security officers, which was developed and held in April of 1971; and

WHEREAS, Assisting Director Harris in these endeavors was the newly formed SUNY Security Directors Association, composed of campus directors and assistant directors; this would eventually become the organizational framework for the SUNY Police Chiefs Association; and

WHEREAS, In the mid-1970s, the Director's Association advocated for changing the name of SUNY law enforcement from security to police, and in 1977, the Board of Trustees endorsed the public safety model as an appropriate mechanism for campus departments to deliver a wide range of safety and security services; and

WHEREAS, From 1987 to 1996, many changes occurred which included increasing training hours to reflect police standards, changing the color of the uniforms to blue gray, and embarking on legislative changes to define officers as police in the Criminal Procedure Law; and

WHEREAS, The 1990s saw increasing national and state concerns on the rise of violent criminal events on campuses, including a number of high profile cases at SUNY campuses; after extensive University-wide debate, the Board of Trustees approved a legislative initiative to change the status of SUNY peace officers to police officers on November 18, 1997; and

WHEREAS, Legislative changes were made to the New York State Executive Law which would allow SUNY departments to take part in the Police Accreditation Program; in 2006, the University of Buffalo became the first SUNY department to achieve accreditation; and

WHEREAS, Today, under the able leadership of Commissioner Paul Berger, University Police are well positioned to provide high quality service to all community members; and

WHEREAS, The tradition of altruistic public service, heroism and leadership embodied by the New York State Police Department is of such magnitude as to be worthy of special, statewide recognition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the University Police of the State University of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Commissioner Paul Berger, University Police of the State University of New York.