

BY: Senator JORDAN

HONORING Raymond F. O'Connor upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Gold Remi Award at the WorldFest-Houston 52nd Annual International Independent Film Festival

WHEREAS, It is the custom 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 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 honor Raymond F. O'Connor upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Gold Remi Award at the WorldFest-Houston 52nd Annual International Independent Film Festival which was held April 5-14, 2019, at the Cinemark Theatres Memorial City in Houston, Texas; and

WHEREAS, The WorldFest-Houston Film Festival is one of the world's oldest and largest film and script competitions; during this year's event, more than 4,400 category entries were competing from 74 countries; and

WHEREAS, Raymond F. O'Connor won the prestigious romance screenwriting award for a screenplay based on his book, **She Called Him Raymond: A True Story of Love, Loss, Faith and Healing**; and

WHEREAS, A resident of Wilton, New York, Raymond F. O'Connor retired from his positions as bank president and chief executive officer to focus on writing after learning about the remarkable story of his mother and her late first husband, Raymond Stephenson, several years ago; and

WHEREAS, The book is the true story of author Raymond F. O'Connor's mother, Helen Gregg, the daughter of Irish immigrant parents raised in the miseries of New York's Hell's Kitchen during the Great Depression, and her husband, Raymond Stephenson, an aspiring World War II B-17 pilot from the struggling city of Ironton, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, They share a brief yet extraordinary life together, until the war tears them apart and he is killed in a flying accident; and

WHEREAS, The screenplay's title, **Foreverly**, was inspired by Jeff Brisbin, a composer, lyricist and performer who wrote a ballad bearing the same title; and

WHEREAS, Today, Raymond F. O'Connor holds the title of Chairman of Saratoga National Bank & Trust Company; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when artistic creators of such remarkable talent and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the

citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Raymond F. O'Connor upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Gold Remi Award at the WorldFest-Houston 52nd Annual International Independent Film Festival; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Raymond F. O'Connor.