

BY: Senator BRESLIN

COMMENDING James J. Connell, Jr. posthumously upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by Rensselaer County at its Honor a Deceased Veteran Ceremony on May 11, 2020

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend James J. Connell, Jr. posthumously upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by Rensselaer County at its Honor a Deceased Veteran Ceremony to be celebrated on Monday, May 11, 2020; and

WHEREAS, James Joseph Connell, Jr. was born to Alice (Merhige) and James Joseph Connell, Sr. on October 28, 1951, in Albany, New York; after he and his family moved to East Greenbush, New York, he graduated from Columbia High School in 1971; later, he earned his degree in journalism and photography from SUNY Morrisville in May of 1974; and

WHEREAS, James J. Connell, Jr. enlisted in the United States Marines on October 3, 1971, and proudly served his country as a rifleman for six years; and

WHEREAS, For his meritorious service, James J. Connell, Jr. was awarded six commendations for exemplary service; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his active duty service, James J. Connell, Jr. worked as a freelance photo journalist for most of his career, contributing to many Capital District newspapers such as the **Glens Falls Post Star** and the **Amsterdam Recorder**; during the mid-1980s, he was the managing editor for the Albany Colonie Yankees' monthly publication; and

WHEREAS, From 1981-2000, James J. Connell, Jr. worked as a photo journalist with the New York State Air National Guard, retiring with the rank of Staff Sergeant after 19 years of service; during this time, he also worked for the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs for 15 years; and

WHEREAS, Never one to sit idle, James J. Connell, Jr. drove a school bus for the City of Rensselaer for more than three years, and most recently, he was a third base usher for the Philadelphia Phillies at their spring training site in Clearwater, Florida; and

WHEREAS, As an extension of his military career, James J. Connell, Jr. was also a lifelong Civil War enthusiast, historian, re-enactor with the 125th C Company, and author of a book entitled A Lonely Battle Stance; and

WHEREAS, James J. Connell, Jr. also enjoyed watching and rooting for the New York Yankees, and loved to spend time with his wife of 45 years, the former Gail E. Harwood; his two sons, Christopher (Shannon) and James J. IV (Felicia); two daughters, Dena (Ian) and Michelle (Patrick); and his 12 cherished grandchildren, Karlina, Cheyenne, Damian, Savannah, Breanna, Angelina, Alyssa, Kiley, Olivia, Logan, Abigail, and Casey; as his children were growing up, James J. Connell, Jr. could often be found coaching them on the baseball or softball diamond; and

WHEREAS, James J. Connell, Jr. died on July 23, 2019, at the age of 67; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, James J. Connell, Jr. demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore, the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend James J. Connell, Jr. posthumously upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by Rensselaer County at its Honor a Deceased Veteran Ceremony on May 11, 2020; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of James J. Connell, Jr.