

BY: M. of A. Cahill

HONORING Dr. Gerald Benjamin upon the occasion of his retirement after more than 50 years of distinguished service as a professor, researcher and dedicated public servant

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize the lasting achievements and legacies of those individuals who substantially contribute to the education, welfare and quality of life of our communities, its citizenry and the entire 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 Dr. Gerald Benjamin upon the occasion of his retirement after more than 50 years of distinguished service as a professor, researcher and dedicated public servant; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gerald Benjamin began his illustrious career at SUNY New Paltz in 1968 as an Assistant Professor of Political Science; he eventually rose to Chairman of the Department of Political Science, Presiding Officer of the Faculty and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Science, reimagining and implementing new programs of study, expanding the existing faculty, diversifying the campus, as well as providing oversight to the work of both the Institute for Disaster Mental Health and **The Legislative Gazette**; and

WHEREAS, His vision and dedication to the University were memorialized in 2002 when Dr. Gerald Benjamin was designated a Distinguished Professor by the SUNY Board of Trustees, and chosen in 2008 to be Associate Vice President for Regional Engagement and Director of the Center for Research, Regional Engagement and Outreach at SUNY New Paltz - fittingly renamed The Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz in 2015 for its founder - the powerhouse research institution that provides immense assistance for important civic matters and approaches to local government and regional solutions in the Hudson Valley and beyond; and

WHEREAS, In demonstrating his tremendous altruism, Dr. Gerald Benjamin honorably enlisted to defend our nation, serving in the United States Army from 1970-1972, and ascending to the senior rank of Captain in the Medical Service Corps; and

WHEREAS, After being elected to the Ulster County Legislature in 1981, Dr. Gerald Benjamin rose to lead his colleagues as Majority Leader from 1985-1991, and eventually the entire Legislative Body, serving as Chairman from 1991-1993, which was the Chief Executive of the County, the highest elected position at the time; and

WHEREAS, Recognized early as the preeminent scholar and expert on New York State and local governments, Dr. Gerald Benjamin has acted in critical positions such as Principal Research Advisor to a New York City

Charter Commission, Director of the Center for the New York State and Local Government Studies at SUNY's Rockefeller Institute of Government, and Research Director of the Temporary State Commission on Constitutional Revision - an appointment by Governor Mario Cuomo; and

WHEREAS, His contributions to the region and the state were further acknowledged by a unanimous appointment by the Ulster County Legislature in 2004 to Chair the Ulster County Charter Commission - ultimately creating the form of government now in effect - and when he was appointed by Governor Eliot Spitzer in 2007 to the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness; and

WHEREAS, With acclaim and success following him internationally, Dr. Gerald Benjamin was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Tokyo and the Japanese Foreign Ministry School, a Serbelloni Fellow in Residence at the Rockefeller Foundation Study Center in Bellagio, Italy, and a Visiting Professor at Meiji University in Tokyo, Japan; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gerald Benjamin has been a fount of knowledge and a primary resource to policymakers and students alike, having authored or edited at least 15 books and countless more reports, essays and articles on public policies, institutions and operations, garnering widespread respect, accolades and notoriety; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the quality of life in their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their profession, certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; and; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Dr. Gerald Benjamin upon the occasion of his retirement after more than 50 years of distinguished service as a professor, researcher and dedicated public servant, and to celebrate his lasting influence in reforming state and local governments across New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dr. Gerald Benjamin.