

BY: Senator LANZA

COMMEMORATING the 50th Anniversary of the Staten
Island Campus of St. John's University

WHEREAS, New York State's commitment to education is unparalleled; its history and stature are secured by the superlative caliber of its educational professionals and the students they inspire; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those institutions of true purpose and high achievement whose exemplary programs and accomplishments clearly demonstrate an enduring pursuit of excellence in higher education for the young adults of this noble Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Staten Island Campus of St. John's University; and

WHEREAS, Since 1971, the Staten Island campus has been the bridge to success for thousands of St. John's students; to commemorate its 50th Anniversary, on April 28, 2022, this vital institution will be recognized the "Bridge to the Future," highlighting the spirit of innovation and the Vincentian mission which first brought St. John's to Staten Island; and

WHEREAS, The site of the Staten Island campus was originally purchased in the early 20th century by immigrant John Gans; he chose the Grymes Hill location for his family estate because it overlooked New York Harbor, where he operated a steamship company; and

WHEREAS, The main house of the estate, a 30-room Georgian mansion, was completed in 1915 and became home to his son, Herbert Gans, and his family; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1930s, Herbert Gans and his wife befriended Mother Saint Egbert, later known as Sister Helen Flynn, a Sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame; she had just been named the Director of the newly established Staten Island extension of Fordham University which was housed at Notre Dame Academy, a private school down the road from the Gans estate; and

WHEREAS, When the small college of 13 students received its own charter in 1933, the Gans family sold the family mansion to the new Notre Dame College, a Catholic undergraduate college for women; the home, renamed Flynn Hall after the college foundress, opened in 1934 and graduated its first class in 1935; and

WHEREAS, In 1937, Lavelle Hall, an academic building, was added and named in honor of Monsignor Lavelle, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of New York; a science building followed in 1945, named

Mahoney Hall after its principal benefactor; and

WHEREAS, In 1955, the college doubled its property with the purchase of the Herbert Gans estate, which included several properties; the largest was the college library, Spellman Hall, named after Francis Cardinal Spellman, then-archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, who contributed toward its reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, The final purchase, an English Tudor home at the far end of the campus, was made in 1965; the Drury family, who had purchased the house from Hans Gans in 1945, sold the house and surrounding property to Notre Dame College; it was renamed Rosati Hall in honor of Bishop Joseph Rosati, C.M.; and

WHEREAS, Notre Dame College served the community as a premier women's college for more than 30 years; during the late 1960s, when it became difficult for small colleges to survive, Terence Cardinal Cooke, then Archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, asked the Vincentian fathers of St. John's University to integrate Notre Dame College, to ensure that Catholic higher education remained a vibrant presence in the Staten Island community and its environs; and

WHEREAS, On January 27, 1971, the New York State Board of Regents approved the consolidation, and the Staten Island campus of St. John's University became a reality; classes began in the Fall of 1971, combining the original Notre Dame College with the Brooklyn campus of St. John's, offering undergraduate degrees in liberal arts, business, and education; and

WHEREAS, The Staten Island campus then saw considerable growth; a new building housing the Loretto Memorial Library opened in 1973, named in honor of Loretto McCarthy, the late wife of Charles E. McCarthy, Vice President for Business Affairs and Treasurer of the University; in the 1980s, the Campus Center was added, including dining facilities, student support services, and a gymnasium; and

WHEREAS, Dedicated in 1999, the Kelleher Center is a student-centered building donated by University Trustee and alumnus Denis Kelleher, and his wife, Carol, and is the home for enrollment services, premier meeting space, and a state-of-the-art Fitness Center; and

WHEREAS, In the Fall of 2004, the campus welcomed the John J. DaSilva Academic Center, which features computer labs for student and community use, a media lab, computer-assisted classroom space, faculty office space, and student/faculty meeting spaces; one year later, a newly refurbished Rosati Hall welcomed the College of Professional Studies administrative offices, faculty spaces, student commons, and conference space; and

WHEREAS, Today, The Staten Island campus has expanded to include 16.5 acres serving more than 2,000 students who are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs; and

WHEREAS, St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The Peter

J. Tobin College of Business, The Lesley H. and William L. Collins College of Professional Studies, and The School of Education offer degree programs on the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels with an opportunity for a commuter or residential experience; more than 10,000 degrees have been awarded on the campus to date; and

WHEREAS, This unique campus, where turn-of-the-century buildings stand alongside contemporary edifices, has a magical history of design and purpose; after a half century, it continues to fulfill the promise to bring together the academic rigor of a national Catholic University with the Vincentian mission; and

WHEREAS, Steeped in a proud and distinguished history, the Staten Island Campus of St. John's University may look back with pride upon its humble beginnings, find just satisfaction in its purposeful growth and hold true of purpose in its dedication to serving the educational needs of its students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Staten Island Campus of St. John's University, noting the propriety of its goals, the constancy of its commitment and the significance of its accomplishments; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Staten Island Campus of St. John's University.