

BY: Senator RITCHIE

CELEBRATING the life and accomplishments of legendary Boxing Great Joe Louis, and recognizing the many contributions he made to the State of New York and its residents

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge outstanding athletes who distinguished themselves through their exceptional performance, attaining unprecedented success and the highest level of personal achievement; Joe Louis was one such athlete; his life of athletic achievements inspired others and contributed to the respect and admiration of the sport of boxing; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to celebrate the life and accomplishments of legendary Boxing Great Joe Louis, and to recognize the many contributions he made to the State of New York and its residents; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Louis Barrow was born on May 13, 1914, in LaFayette, Alabama; he was an American professional boxer who competed from 1934 to 1951; and

WHEREAS, Nicknamed the Brown Bomber, today, Joe Louis is praised as one of the greatest and most influential boxers of all time; he reigned as the world heavyweight champion from 1937 to until his temporary retirement in 1949; and

WHEREAS, This extraordinary fighter was victorious in 25 consecutive title defenses, a record for all weight classes; out of his 69 professional fights, he won 66 and tallied 52 knockouts, losing only three matches; and

WHEREAS, On August 30, 1937, Joe Louis and Tommy Farr fought at Yankee Stadium before a crowd of approximately 32,000; and

WHEREAS, One year later, on June 22, 1938, Joe Louis and German Boxer Max Schmeling (Nazi) fought at Yankee Stadium before a crowd of 70,043; the Brown Bomber was a focal point of anti-Nazi sentiment leading up to and during World War II because of this historic rematch; and

WHEREAS, Joe Louis also fought Billy Conn in front of a crowd of 54,487 fans on June 18, 1941, at the Polo Grounds in New York City; in this fight, the State of New York was entitled to \$30,000 of his earnings; and

WHEREAS, On January 9, 1942, Joe Louis fought a charity bout for the Navy Relief Society against his former opponent Buddy Baer, which raised \$47,000 for the fund; the next day, he volunteered to enlist as a Private in the United States Army at Camp Upton, Long Island; and

WHEREAS, Joe Louis' cultural impact was felt well outside the ring; he is widely regarded as the first person of African-American descent to achieve the status of a nationwide hero within the United States; and

WHEREAS, Joe Louis was instrumental in integrating the game of golf, breaking the sport's color barrier in America by appearing under a sponsor's exemption in a PGA event in 1952; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout was his third wife of 22 years, Martha Jackson, a lawyer from Los Angeles, California, as well as his six children, all of whom feel privileged to have been a part of his life and rejoiced in his achievements; currently, his one son, the younger Joe Louis Barrow, Jr., lives in New York City, and is involved in boxing; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, Joe Louis was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York; the highlights of his illustrious career are full of fighting for more than victory in the boxing ring; and

WHEREAS, Bomber Brown Joe Louis died on April 12, 1981, at the age of 66, in Paradise, Nevada; and

WHEREAS, An exceptional competitor, Joe Louis was a renowned legend in the sport of professional boxing; his character and accomplishments stand as a sterling example and inspiration to all who would aspire to succeed; he is deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life and accomplishments of legendary Boxing Great Joe Louis, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Joe Louis.