Senate Resolution No. 528

BY: Senator KENNEDY

MOURNING the death of Mary C. Heneghan, a devoted wife and mother, and tireless champion for the Irish American community

WHEREAS, There are certain outstanding members of our community who, through their selfless commitment and dedication, have served to better the quality of life in our community and have had a measurable positive impact on the lives of its residents; Mary C. Heneghan was one such individual; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Mary C. Heneghan, noting the significance of her purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Mary C. Heneghan of Orchard Park, New York, died on July 31, 2022, at the age of 76; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to her Irish culture, Mary C. Heneghan was the longtime Director of the Buffalo Irish Center, an organization dedicated to preserving traditional Irish heritage and culture; she became chair of the Board of Directors more than two decades ago, and was its longest tenured leader at the time of her death; and

WHEREAS, A charismatic leader who did everything with love, Mary C. Heneghan helped forge or improve the Irish Center's Emerald Room, pub, library, Gaelic language and cultural classes, as well as its Annual Buffalo Irish Center Civic Luncheon; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, this extraordinary woman served as president of the Gaelic American Athletic Association, and was the driving force behind nearly every local Irish event, including the reinvention of the Buffalo Irish Festival on Buffalo's Outer Harbor which she organized from a hospital bed; and

WHEREAS, Mary C. Heneghan's final hours truly symbolized a decades-long determination to assure that those with roots on the Emerald Isle honor their ancestry; and

WHEREAS, Born on March 1, 1946, in Mercy Hospital, Mary C. Breen grew up in South Buffalo; her father, John Breen, who moved in 1922 from Kilmihil, County Clare, and mother, Katherine Scanlon, instilled their cultural heritage at an early age, both at home and on frequent trips to Ireland; and

WHEREAS, Love for her father's homeland and the family's roots in her own South Buffalo community intensified after she met Thomas Heneghan, who had moved to the neighborhood in 1955 from Kilmaine, County Mayo; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Heneghan and Mary C. Breen were united in marriage at St. Teresa's in 1965 and moved to West Seneca a couple of years later; the couple moved to East Aurora in the mid-1970s, and along the way, instilled the love of all things Irish in their four wonderful children; and

WHEREAS, Mary C. Heneghan was a teacher at Winchester Elementary School in West Seneca before leaving the profession in 1980 to open Tara Gift Shoppe; located across from the Irish Center on Abbott Road in South Buffalo, the shop was named after the Hill of Tara in County Meath, seat of the high kings of Ireland in the early Christian era, and offered Irish crystal and other collectibles, knitwear, jewelry and more; under her able leadership, the gift shop became a regional touchstone for all things Irish; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by her beloved husband, Thomas, Mary C. Heneghan is survived by her four children, Mary Kay, Thomas (Debbie), Shannon (Vincent) and Barry (Tracy); and three grandchildren, Lucy, Jonas and Allie; as well as many cousins, nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Mary C. Heneghan's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through her family's vivid and happy memories; her insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives she touched; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Mary C. Heneghan leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing woman; she will be 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 mourn the death of Mary C. Heneghan, and to express its deepest condolences to her family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Mary C. Heneghan.