Assembly Resolution No. 657

BY: M. of A. McMahon

MOURNING the death of John B. Askey, renowned police chief, devoted family man, and distinguished member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to convey its grateful appreciation and heartfelt regret in recognition of the loss of a courageous police officer who dedicated his life and career in faithful service to his family, community and the Amherst Police Department; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sadness that this Legislative Body records the passing of retired Amherst Police Chief John B. Askey, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, John B. Askey, who played a key role in making Amherst the safest community in the country during his tenure as police chief, died on May 20, 2023, at the age of 84; and

WHEREAS, John B. "Jay" Askey was born in Buffalo, New York, one of six children, and attended Kenmore High School; he enlisted in the United States Navy in 1956, during which time he served as an aviation electronics technician and attained the rank of petty officer third class; and

WHEREAS, John B. Askey began his illustrious career with the Amherst Police Department as a patrolman in 1963, before being promoted to patrol lieutenant in 1969 and patrol captain in 1972; and

WHEREAS, After earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from what is now Buffalo State University in 1975, John B. Askey graduated from the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Program; and

WHEREAS, John B. Askey was then named by Chief Herbert E. Zimmerman to head planning for the department's move from Williamsville to John Jay Audubon Parkway; he was instrumental in the construction of the new headquarters building, which opened in 1979, and in the establishment of a computer-aided dispatch system; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, John B. Askey became Zimmerman's administrative assistant, handling media relations, personnel, internal investigations, records and communications; during this time, he was largely responsible for writing rules for the department and setting up operating procedures; and

WHEREAS, John B. Askey was appointed Chief in December of 1988, only the third chief to serve the Amherst Police Department, which was founded in 1924; and

WHEREAS, In this capacity, Chief John B. Askey created a Family Offense Unit to deal with domestic violence cases and initiated bike

patrols, neighborhood outreach programs and a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program for youth; he also oversaw the response to the Spring of Life anti-abortion protests in 1992, and coordinated the

town's massive security effort for the World University Games at the University at Buffalo in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Chief John B. Askey put his department at the forefront among suburban communities by introducing semi-automatic pistols as standard sidearms for his officers in 1990; he regularly was thrust into Amherst's ongoing debate about controlling deer, which included a bait-and-shoot program carried out by police; and

WHEREAS, Most notably, under his able leadership, **Money** magazine declared Amherst, Buffalo's most populous suburb, the safest large municipality in the nation two years in a row (1996 and 1997); and

WHEREAS, After serving the Amherst Police Department with dedication, loyalty and compassion for 36 years, Chief John B. Askey retired in January of 1999; he received numerous awards, including the Erie County Bar Association's Police Officer Award; and

WHEREAS, In retirement, John B. Askey enjoyed golf, spending time with his family, and wintering in New Smyrna Beach, Florida; his son, John C., succeeded him as chief in 2007 and retired in 2021; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to his community, John B. Askey was a longtime member of the users committee of Erie County Central Police Services and a member of the State Division of Criminal Justice planning committee; he was also a member of Amherst Township Post No. 416, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his wife of 61 years, the former Shirley Duscher, survivors include three sons, Timothy, John C. and David; two brothers, Thomas and Gerald "Bill"; four grandchildren and two great-grandsons; and

WHEREAS, John B. Askey's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through his family's vivid and happy memories; his insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives he touched; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, John B. Askey 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 man; he 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 John B. Askey, 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 John B. Askey.