

Senate Resolution No. 1314

**BY:** Senator MAY

**MOURNING** the death of Peter Knoblock,  
distinguished citizen and devoted member of his  
community

**WHEREAS,** It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavors served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Peter Knoblock, of Syracuse, New York, died on Friday, December 26, 2025, at the age of 91; and

**WHEREAS,** Peter Knoblock was born in Passaic, New Jersey, during the Depression; during his early years, his family moved frequently which caused him to seek a settled "home" foundation in adulthood; and

**WHEREAS,** At the University of Michigan, Peter Knoblock was among the first to receive a joint doctorate degree in psychology and education; his interest in integrated education began while working with a small group of children with Down Syndrome; and

**WHEREAS,** In 1962, Peter Knoblock came to Syracuse University, where he spent 34 years as Professor of Special Education, preparing teachers to work with children with special needs; he also pioneered a field-based teacher education program in which his students worked daily in the Syracuse schools; and

**WHEREAS,** In the late 1960s, a small group of parents in Syracuse gathered at May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Church; at that time, alternative schooling, defined as child-led, experiential, and diverse learning, was becoming popular in America; and

**WHEREAS,** These pioneering parents desired to provide an alternative type of educational setting which traditional public schools could not; thus, Jowonio School was established; "Jowonio" is derived from the Onondaga Nation's language, meaning "to set free"; and

**WHEREAS,** Although Jowonio School did not begin as a school for children with special needs, it quickly developed in that manner as people became increasingly aware of alternative education; and

**WHEREAS,** Jowonio School, the first of its kind, had its humble beginning in Peter Knoblock's basement in 1969; a nonprofit school, where children of all abilities could learn together, became the new model of the American preschool; and

**WHEREAS,** Today, more than 56 years later, Jowonio School continues its mission to provide a model that is an inclusive educational environment where students of all abilities are supported to learn and grow together, reaching their full potential; and

**WHEREAS,** Throughout the decades, Peter Knoblock was active in many local organizations, including Parents for Public Schools (PPS), Alliance for Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS), and the Early Childhood Alliance; and

**WHEREAS,** A PhD Professor Emeritus at Syracuse University, Peter Knoblock received the Mary Ficchi Lifetime Achievement in Education Award in 2011, bestowed upon him by the Parents for Public Schools; for his leadership in education, he earned the Post-Standard Person of Achievement Award in 2012; and

**WHEREAS,** Following his retirement from Syracuse University, Peter Knoblock served as a docent for the Everson Museum of Art and realized his dream of opening a private psychology practice; additionally, he authored many scholarly articles and books; and

**WHEREAS,** Peter Knoblock is survived by his wife and partner of 42 years, Joy Casey; daughter, Ana Knoblock (Michael Dieffenbach); sons, Todd (Kathy) Knoblock, Gary Knoblock, Craig Knoblock (Claire Bono); and grandchildren, Alex and Margaret Knoblock; and

**WHEREAS,** Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Peter Knoblock leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Peter Knoblock, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Peter Knoblock.