

Senate Resolution No. 162

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMEMORATING the 75th Anniversary of WKTV on
December 1, 2024

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality and character of life in this great Empire State is indelibly enriched by the faithful and untiring efforts of those individuals who have helped shape the history of broadcasting in their area; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of WKTV on Sunday, December 1, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Myron Kallet was in the movie business in the 1930s before he pivoted to radio, noticing the changes in technology and shifts in patronage to his movie showings; he applied for and was granted a license for a radio station in Rome, New York, and WKAL was subsequently built and put on the air soon after; and

WHEREAS, After Myron Kallet's venture into the world of radio, one of his friends who worked in the FCC in Washington gave him a call and invited him to explore the new medium of television; Myron Kallet submitted the proper application and was granted channel 13; and

WHEREAS, The new television studio, business offices, and broadcast tower were constructed on top of Smith Hill in Deerfield, overlooking the City of Utica on the northern ridge of the Mohawk Valley; and

WHEREAS, On December 1, 1949, WKTV went on the air and was the 93rd television station in the country to sign on; it remains one of the oldest members of the NBC network; and

WHEREAS, The program schedule began as a jumbled mix of news, variety shows, and commercials, beginning late in the afternoon and ending before midnight; most shows were 15 or 30 minutes in duration and were done live; most of the local on-air personalities were former radio announcers; the station later participated in hosting early versions of telethons and then broadcasted useful public service information, such as local news and weather; and

WHEREAS, WKTV was also host to a variety of unique programs such as a cooking show, a "HIGH SCHOOL QUIZ" show, and an after-school show featuring a clown named Bozo; and

WHEREAS, In the mid-1950s, a local radio announcer joined the staff of announcers at WKTV and quickly gained a following; this new talent was Dick Clark, world-renowned television and radio personality and television producer; and

WHEREAS, A decade later, the station's ownership transferred to Paul

Harron of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; under his direction and under the advice of the FCC, a new broadcast tower was constructed further east, ultimately moving WKTU to channel 2 from channel 13; and

WHEREAS, Ownership remained the same and the station continued to prosper through the 1970s and '80s; in the mid-'80s, the FCC came down with several rulings concerning cross ownership of broadcast, cable, and print media in the same communities; and

WHEREAS, Harron Communication owned both WKTU and Harron Cable TV in Utica; it was required that they must divest themselves of one or the other; in 1992, an agreement was reached between Harron Communications and Smith Broadcasting of New York, Inc. and for only the third time in its long history, WKTU's license changed hands; and

WHEREAS, In March of 2014, WKTU and its cable channel sister station WBU were purchased by Heartland Media; WKTU became the first station in the newly formed Heartland television group; and

WHEREAS, WKTU has a rich and proud history; that history has been a catalyst to today's successful performance by the station and the foundation for the future of television in the Mohawk Valley; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the past 75 years, WKTU has flourished and broadened its programming, becoming more popular with increasing support from the community; and

WHEREAS, The success of WKTU is in direct correlation to the efforts of its members, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the community; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to those illustrious broadcasters who have diligently and consistently, year after year, recorded the history of their communities and brought local news and news of the larger world to their listeners and viewers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of WKTU; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to WKTU.