

**BY:** Senator GRIFFO

**COMMENDING** Dr. Michael Kelberman upon the occasion of his induction into the 2024 Oneida County Historical Richard W. Couper Living Legends Hall of Fame on October 10, 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 their area; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Dr. Michael Kelberman upon the occasion of his induction into the 2024 Oneida County Historical Richard W. Couper Living Legends Hall of Fame on Thursday, October 10, 2024, at the Irish Cultural Center in Utica, New York; and

**WHEREAS,** The Oneida County Historical Hall of Fame was established in 1946 and honors individuals from Oneida County who made an impact on the local community and the world; the Living Legends category was added in 2001 to celebrate present-day models of people making a difference; and

**WHEREAS,** When Dr. Michael Kelberman's son, Harry, was diagnosed with autism at two years of age, he and his wife, Jennifer, were introduced to an unfamiliar world, with a suddenly uncertain future and no clear path forward; even as a practicing cardiologist and his wife a trained nurse practitioner, the couple struggled to find sophisticated diagnostic, behavioral, or educational resources locally; and

**WHEREAS,** During this time, Dr. Michael Kelberman and his wife made the decision to take their resources and energy and create a state-of-the-art autism organization in their community of Utica, New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Today, the Kelberman Center is a leading autism services center for children, adults and families, providing comprehensive autism programs and services for people throughout all phases of life, from early childhood through adulthood, including Home & Community Based, Educational, Clinical, Residential, and Camp; and

**WHEREAS,** With a goal to meet people and families where they are in life and to support them every step of the way as they define autism and navigate that journey together, the expert staff at the Kelberman Center empower those they support with specialized one-of-a-kind programs, resources, and wrap-around services, creating a fulfilling, life-enriching experience for people and families; and

**WHEREAS,** Recognizing the need to serve families with autism beyond preschool, Kelberman was officially incorporated as its own non-profit

organization in 2005 in Utica, New York; currently, the Center has locations in Utica and Syracuse as well as seven community residences; and

**WHEREAS,** In 2021, Kelberman opened the LINK apartments in Utica, an inclusive living community for people of all abilities, the first-ever of its kind in New York State; and

**WHEREAS,** This vital organization has grown tremendously since its inception; few autism organizations have been able to offer such a broad array of high-quality services and programs, and its reach has expanded across much of Upstate New York as the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder continues to grow; and

**WHEREAS,** With a tireless and unwavering commitment to Central New York and beyond, Dr. Michael Kelberman devoted his entire life to improving the quality of life for others, enabling them to build lives of dignity and self-worth; and

**WHEREAS,** This extraordinary man has lived an immensely beautiful life built on compassion, kindness, and respect for others; he is one of the most significant and enduring civic and medical leaders in the County of Oneida, and his insight and strength will forever inspire the lives of the countless people he has touched; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Dr. Michael Kelberman upon the occasion of his induction into the 2024 Oneida County Historical Richard W. Couper Living Legends Hall of Fame on October 10, 2024; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dr. Michael Kelberman.