

Senate Resolution No. 1962

BY: Senator PALUMBO

HONORING influential Black authors upon the occasion of their designation for special recognition at the 4th Annual Black Authors Festival on August 1, 2026

WHEREAS, It is the custom of the Legislative Body to pay tribute to those illustrious thought leaders of their community, who strive to support literacy and the creation of powerful stories to uplift the Black community; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor influential Black authors upon the occasion of their designation for special recognition at the 4th Annual Black Authors Festival on Saturday, August 1, 2026, at the Black Authors Festival in Sag Harbor, New York; and

WHEREAS, Celebrating the power of words and Black authors, the Black Authors Festival aims to support literacy and honor influential Black authors and thought leaders in the community; it was founded by two professional Black women who curated the renowned event to acquaint and re-acquaint Black people with the notion of penning and publishing their own stories; and

WHEREAS, The honorees being featured at the Black Authors Festival are: Darlene Williams, a cultural leader and founder of the Black Authors Festival who advances literacy, intellectual freedom, and meaningful dialogue by elevating and connecting Black authors, readers, and thought leaders; Maurice L. Williams, LMSW, MA, a social worker and nonprofit leader who, as Vice President of the Black Authors Festival and Executive Director of A Father's Love, advances literacy, mentorship, and community empowerment through leadership, education, and cultural engagement; Dr. Mathew Knowles, a renowned music executive and founder of Music World Entertainment who shaped the global music industry by developing iconic artists like Destiny's Child and Beyonce through visionary leadership and strategic innovation; Rickey Smiley, a nationally recognized comedian and media personality who, through his radio show, television work, and philanthropy, uses humor and storytelling to entertain audiences while promoting community engagement, youth development, and social awareness; Tiffany Cross, an award-winning journalist and political commentator who uses her media platforms and writing to elevate conversations on politics, race, and social justice while advocating for informed civic engagement and the empowerment of underrepresented voices; Jamie Arty, an author and preservationist who blends storytelling, historical research, and restoration to inspire appreciation for heritage, identity, and the enduring power of home; Michelle Miller, an award-winning CBS News correspondent and co-host who delivers impactful journalism and storytelling that informs audiences while highlighting diverse voices, human experiences, and issues of national importance; A'Lelia Bundles,

an award-winning journalist, author, and cultural historian who preserves and shares African American history by documenting the legacy of Madam C. J. Walker and highlighting stories of entrepreneurship, empowerment, and cultural achievement; Reverend Dr. A. R. Bernard, Sr., a pastor, author, and faith leader who has shaped spiritual, civic, and cultural life for over four decades by guiding congregants, advising leaders, and promoting faith-driven community empowerment; Jamaal Bernard, Sr., Senior Pastor of the Christian Cultural Center, guiding the congregation with faith-driven leadership that honors its legacy while advancing spiritual growth, community outreach, and empowerment for the next generation; Tyrus Hinton, an author, speaker, coach, and nonprofit leader who empowers individuals and families through resilience, faith, and personal transformation while advancing community support, mentorship, and confidence-building initiatives; Ruth D. Allman, an author and storyteller who inspires children to embrace creativity, music, and collaboration, using her writing to promote imagination, empathy, and the transformative power of the arts; Rochell Sleets, Editor-in-Chief of Newsday and a trailblazing journalist who leads the newsroom with visionary leadership, fostering editorial excellence, community-focused reporting, and mentorship while advancing diverse voices in local journalism; and Amaryllis Greene, a young author, actress, and creative advocate whose work in poetry, performance, and community engagement inspires self-expression, confidence, and creativity among youth while celebrating curiosity and emerging voices; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the remarkable achievements and contributions of these influential Black authors deserve the highest recognition, and that their dedication to literacy, cultural preservation, and empowerment serves as an inspiration to all citizens of the Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor influential Black authors upon the occasion of their designation for special recognition at the 4th Annual Black Authors Festival on August 1, 2026; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the aforementioned honorees and the Black Authors Festival Board.