

Senate Resolution No. 2093

BY: Senator BAILEY

MOURNING the death of George Gresham, 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, On Friday, May 8, 2026, George Gresham left his loved ones at the age of 71; and

WHEREAS, George Gresham was born in Virginia in 1955; as a child, he moved to New York City where his mother worked in homecare and his father later became a union truck driver; and

WHEREAS, George Gresham began his career in the housekeeping department at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan; later, he moved to the radiology department as a clerk after which he pursued training through the 1199 Training Fund to become an MRI technologist; and

WHEREAS, In 1975, George Gresham joined 1199SEIU as a rank-and-file member and quickly advanced through the union's leadership ranks, holding every elected position in the union's constitution, including member delegate, organizer, vice president, executive vice president, secretary-treasurer, and president; and

WHEREAS, As president from 2007 until his resignation in 2025, George Gresham championed industry-leading job and benefit standards for healthcare workers, securing higher wages, affordable health benefits, dignified retirement, continuing education, childcare, and safe staffing; and

WHEREAS, George Gresham positioned 1199SEIU as a major progressive force in New York State and nationally, advocating for social justice issues such as access to quality healthcare, living wages, racial and immigrant justice, gender and LGBTQI+ equality, and environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, Beyond healthcare, George Gresham served on the boards of the NAACP, Children's Defense Fund, A. Philip Randolph Institute, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Murphy Institute Labor Advisory Board, Consortium for Worker Education, and Partnership for Quality Care; he was known for building coalitions to advance progressive causes and for his steadfast advocacy for working people and communities of color; and

WHEREAS, George Gresham was a prominent American labor leader and the long-serving president of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East,

the Nation's largest healthcare union, representing more than 450,000 members across multiple states; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, George Gresham 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 George Gresham, 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 George Gresham.