

Senate Resolution No. 2208

BY: Senator PARKER

COMMENDING Egbe Iwa, Inc., upon the occasion of hosting its 11th Annual Ite Siwaju Commencement Gala on June 7, 2026

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations of high purpose and worthy accomplishment whose enduring commitment to the cultural formation, moral development, and community belonging of young people has enriched the civic and spiritual life of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Egbe Iwa, Inc., upon the occasion of hosting its 11th Annual Ite Siwaju Commencement Gala on Sunday, June 7, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Egbe Iwa, Inc., founded in 2002 by Iya Amma Oloriwaa! in historic Brooklyn, New York, is a year-long rite-of-passage and cultural mentoring program that has served the community for more than two decades, welcoming Oluko (mentors) and Akeko (youth participants) of any race, creed, color, or gender identity into a community dedicated to guiding, supporting, and nurturing the leaders of tomorrow's world; and

WHEREAS, The name Egbe Iwa carries within it the full weight of the organization's mission and philosophy: Egbe, meaning a society or community of people bound by shared purpose and identity, and Iwa, the Yoruba concept of character, essence, and the quality of one's being, that fundamental virtue which the Yoruba philosophical tradition holds as the highest adornment of the human spirit; and

WHEREAS, Rooted in the Yoruba tradition and grounded in the living wisdom of the African diaspora, Egbe Iwa understands that the formation of young people is not merely an educational endeavor but a sacred one and that the rite of passage, marking a young person's transition from childhood to young adulthood, are among the most essential ceremonies a community can offer, transmitting values, identity, ancestry, and belonging across generations in an unbroken chain of cultural continuity; and

WHEREAS, Iya Amma Oloriwaa!, founder and Alakoso (director) of Egbe Iwa, Inc., is: a member of the Brooklyn Academy of Music's DanceAfrica esteemed Council of Elders; a founding member of the Omo Obatala Egbe, Inc., and the Ijo Orisa Yoruba Church, Inc.; a community activist and leader who formed Egbe Iwa for the benefit of her children, all of whom are graduates of the program, now serving as mentors and workshop leaders; and a living embodiment of the intergenerational covenant at the heart of the organization's mission; and

WHEREAS, Egbe Iwa, Inc., is a non-profit organization with more than 100 alumni and robust community support whose graduates carry into the world not only skills and knowledge but a deepened sense of self, an

abiding connection to their cultural heritage, and the moral formation that the concept of Iwa demands-- young people of character, who are ready to lead; and

WHEREAS, The Ite Siwaju is the culminating ceremony of Egbe Iwa's year-long rite-of-passage program, the moment when the community gathers to witness and celebrate the young people who have done the interior and exterior work of transformation, claiming their seat at the table of adulthood with the full blessing of their Oluko, their families, and their community; and

WHEREAS, Now, in its 11th year, the Ite Siwaju Commencement Gala stands as a testament to what is possible when a community seriously heeds its responsibility to its young people and the traditions that have sustained African and diasporic peoples through every era of challenge and transformation; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is proudly moved to honor Egbe Iwa, Inc., its founder Iya Amma Oloriwaa!, Oluko, Akeko, alumni, and the extended community of ancestors, elders, and kin whose love and wisdom make this work possible; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Egbe Iwa, Inc., upon the occasion of hosting its 11th Annual Ite Siwaju Commencement Gala on June 7, 2026, and to extend heartfelt congratulations to the graduating class and deepest appreciation to all who have walked alongside them; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Iya Amma Oloriwaa!, Oluko, Akeko, and the entire Egbe Iwa community in recognition of their sacred and steadfast commitment to the formation of young people of character in the tradition of good character.