

Senate Resolution No. 2291

BY: Senator HARCKHAM

MOURNING the death of Gerard Michael McKenna, 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 endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Gerard Michael McKenna, of Somers, New York, died on May 14, 2026, at the age of 85; and

WHEREAS, Gerard Michael "Gerry" McKenna was born to Michael and Margaret McKenna in South Bronx, New York, on July 15, 1940; he had two sisters, Peggy Ann Leahy and Sister Amadeus "Birdie" McKenna; and

WHEREAS, Gerard McKenna attended Regis High School, a Jesuit institution to which he felt forever indebted; while on academic scholarship, he graduated from Boston College where he played basketball and served in the United States Army ROTC; and

WHEREAS, In later years, Gerard McKenna also earned a Master of Public Administration and Master of Business Administration from Golden Gate University and Baruch College; and

WHEREAS, After serving as personal aide to Brigadier General Charles "Monk" Meyer, in 1966, Captain Gerard McKenna deployed to Vietnam; there, he eventually took command of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, a unit engaged in airmobile operations within the Ia Drang Valley; and

WHEREAS, For his service, Gerard McKenna earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge and a Bronze Star; he carried the names of his fellow servicemen who lost their lives; he spent the next 25 years in the Army National Guard and Reserves, a period of time which included graduating from the Army War College, serving as the commander of the Fighting 69th Infantry Regiment, and receiving the Legion of Merit; and

WHEREAS, As Colonel McKenna loved to say, he retired from the Army with "30 years, 29 days" of service, the maximum the law would let him stay; and

WHEREAS, Upon his return from Vietnam in 1967, Gerard McKenna met the love of his life, Cathleen; the two worked closely together for several years before he had the courage to ask her for a date; their love grew quickly, sharing a sense of humor and love of travel; and

WHEREAS, After a brief courtship, Gerard and Cathleen McKenna were married on October 27, 1973, and began their lives together in Park Chester, New York; in 1977, Cathleen fell in love with Somers, New York,

where the two would then share the next 45 years together, building a family; and

WHEREAS, In a close-knit household, the couple raised three children, Daniel, Marshall, and Jennifer; a deeply engaged father, Gerard McKenna never missed his children's sporting events and guided their academic and intellectual development; his family were active members of St. Patrick's in Bedford where he chaired the Parish Council and frequently volunteered as trash collector and security at school functions; and

WHEREAS, In his civilian career, Gerard McKenna rose through the ranks as a commercial lending officer for several large international banks; he enjoyed building rapport with his clients and would regale the family with (repeated) stories of deals won and lost; outside of work, one of his greatest pleasures was mentoring young people and providing support as they faced career crossroads or other life challenges; and

WHEREAS, Over time, the family of five quickly became eight with the addition of the children's spouses, Natalie (Daniel), Kaitlyn (Marshall), and Paul (Jennifer); Gerard McKenna took great pleasure in getting to know each of them and celebrating their successes; and

WHEREAS, No conversation with Gerard McKenna ended without the knowledge of exactly how proud of his children and their partners he was; after his wife's death in 2022, he found comfort in guiding his five grandchildren, Noelle, Patrick, Madeline, Declan, and Emily, and telling them all about their Grandma Cathy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Gerard Michael McKenna and to honor his enduring legacy; his legacy of service and resilience will live on for generations to come, and he will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by all who knew him; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Gerard Michael McKenna.