

BY: Senator PARKER

HONORING Khari Edwards upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition at the Young, Gifted, and Black Entrepreneurial Awards 20th Anniversary Gala on February 26, 2025

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to honor those enduring individuals and organizations which devote their purposeful energies to improving the quality and dignity of life of those they serve, to preserving their heritage, and to fostering pride among them; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Khari Edwards upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition at the Young, Gifted, and Black Entrepreneurial Awards 20th Anniversary Gala on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at Terrace on the Park, Queens, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Young, Gifted, & Black (YGB) Entrepreneurial Awards were established in 2006 by Carl Gray as a platform to spotlight and celebrate everyday individuals who serve as positive role models, inspiring their peers through their accomplishments, perseverance, and contributions; and

WHEREAS, Carl Gray's vision for the YGB Entrepreneurial Awards has remained steadfast in ensuring recognition is given to those whose contributions, though not always highlighted in mainstream media, have a profound and lasting influence within their fields and society; and

WHEREAS, Khari Edwards is a distinguished leader with more than 25 years of experience in public service, healthcare, and community advocacy; and

WHEREAS, Born and raised in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, to immigrant parents from Guyana and Trinidad, Khari Edwards has dedicated his career to addressing racial, health, and civic disparities within his community; and

WHEREAS, Currently, Khari Edwards serves as the Head of Corporate Responsibility at Ayr Wellness, where he leads initiatives to foster inclusivity and create opportunities within the cannabis industry; in this role, he has overseen the impactful Changing Legacies program, which has successfully expunged hundreds of nonviolent criminal records, offering individuals a second chance and a fresh start; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, his work at Ayr Wellness also advances the company's mission to be a "Force for Good" by promoting equity, access, and opportunity for communities impacted by social and racial justice polices; and

WHEREAS, Khari Edwards previously served as Vice President of External Affairs at Brookdale Hospital in Brooklyn, where he played a pivotal role during the COVID-19 crisis; emerging as a fearless advocate for both patients and healthcare workers, he risked his job to ensure their voices were heard; and

WHEREAS, Khari Edwards invited CNN to Brookdale, shining a national spotlight on the hospital's challenges and the resilience of its staff; additionally, he was instrumental in leading vaccination efforts in Central Brooklyn, ensuring equitable access to life-saving vaccines in underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure at Brookdale, Khari Edwards spearheaded initiatives that addressed systemic disparities and strengthened community trust; he founded the "It Starts Here" program, connecting over 2,200 students with victims of gun violence to foster healing and understanding; and

WHEREAS, Khari Edwards' commitment to community extends beyond healthcare; as the Brooklyn Community Connector for Make-A-Wish Metro New York, he helps fulfill life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses; he is also a sought-after speaker, regularly invited to participate in panels and forums on health equity and social justice reform; and

WHEREAS, A proud graduate of New York City public schools, Khari Edwards earned his degree in Liberal Arts from Thomas Edison State University; he continues to live in Crown Heights with his wife, Jahmila, and their three children-Ethan, Niah, and Myles; and

WHEREAS, Today, a candidate for Brooklyn Borough President in 2025, Khari Edwards is committed to leveraging his extensive experience and deep community connections to create a more equitable and prosperous Brooklyn; his campaign focuses on uniting the borough's diverse communities, improving healthcare access, promoting public safety, and fostering economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those individuals and organizations which give positive definition to the profile and disposition of the communities of the State of New York, do so profoundly strengthen our shared commitment to the exercise of freedom; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Khari Edwards upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition at the Young, Gifted, and Black Entrepreneurial Awards 20th Anniversary Gala on Wednesday, February 26, 2025; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Khari Edwards.