

Assembly Resolution No. 1242

BY: M. of A. Fall

HONORING the Washington Street Historical Society upon the occasion of the unveiling of its monument, "Al Qalam: Poets in the Park," at Elizabeth H. Berger Plaza on April 30, 2026

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those organizations whose dedication to preserving history and promoting cultural understanding enriches the communities of this State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor the Washington Street Historical Society for its steadfast commitment to preserving the history of Lower Manhattan's "Little Syria," the earliest Arabic-speaking community in the United States; and

WHEREAS, From the late 19th century through the early 20th century, this neighborhood served as a vibrant center of cultural, literary, and commercial life, contributing significantly to the social fabric of New York City; through years of advocacy, education, and preservation efforts, the Washington Street Historical Society has ensured that the legacy of this community endures; and

WHEREAS, The monument, "Al Qalam: Poets in the Park," is designed by French-Moroccan artist Sara Ouhammadou and features mosaic seating elements and a central sculptural form representing the Arabic word "al qalam," meaning "The Pen"; and

WHEREAS, This installation highlights the literary contributions of notable Arab-American poets, including Kahlil Gibran and Ameen Rihani, reflecting the rich cultural and intellectual heritage of the Little Syria community; and

WHEREAS, The unveiling of this monument marks a meaningful milestone, honoring the contributions, stories, and enduring cultural legacy of the Little Syria community, and stands as a lasting tribute and educational resource for future generations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the Washington Street Historical Society upon the occasion of the unveiling of "Al Qalam: Poets in the Park" at Elizabeth H. Berger Plaza on April 30, 2026; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Washington Street Historical Society and the Office of the Mayor of New York City in recognition of its outstanding contributions to preserving the history and cultural heritage of New York.