Assembly Resolution No. 686

BY: M. of A. Schiavoni

HONORING influential Black authors upon the occasion of special recognition at the Black Authors Festival in Sag Harbor, New York on August 2, 2025

WHEREAS, It is the custom of the Legislative Body to pay tribute to those illustrious thought leaders of their community, who strive to support literacy and the creation of powerful stories to uplift the Black community; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor influential Black authors upon the occasion of special recognition on Saturday, August 2, 2025, at the Black Authors Festival in Sag Harbor, New York; and

WHEREAS, Celebrating the power of words and Black authors, the Black Authors Festival aims to support literacy and honor influential Black authors and thought leaders in the community; it was founded by two professional Black women who curated the renowned event to acquaint and re-acquaint Black people with the notion of penning and publishing their own stories; and

WHEREAS, The honorees being featured at the Black Authors Festival are: Sunny Hostin, an accomplished attorney, award-winning former federal prosecutor, and Emmy-winning journalist known for her impactful legal analysis, social justice advocacy, and commitment to public education through media; Alton Fitzgerald White, a celebrated Broadway star, vocalist, and author best known for his historic run as Mufasa in The Lion King, whose powerful performances and inspirational storytelling have captivated audiences worldwide; Marc Morial, a distinguished civil rights leader, former Mayor of New Orleans, and President and CEO of the National Urban League, whose visionary leadership has advanced equity, economic opportunity, and social justice across the nation; Amaryllis Greene, a remarkable 14-year-old published author, actress, model, and youth advocate whose creative talents and civic engagement inspire and empower young people to embrace their voice and potential; Attika J. Torrence, an award-winning producer, director, writer, and educator whose impactful storytelling across film, television, and literature serves as a powerful vehicle for education, empowerment, and social change; Harriette Cole, a renowned communications expert, author, educator, and empowerment coach whose decades-long career has been dedicated to helping individuals and organizations articulate their purpose, elevate their voices, and realize their dreams; Mimi Dixon, an award-winning marketing executive, diversity champion, and innovative brand strategist whose leadership at Crayola and beyond has shaped impactful campaigns that celebrate inclusion, creativity, and cultural representation; Nicole Johnson, a multiple Emmy Award-winning journalist and community advocate whose powerful and compassionate reporting has brought national attention to critical social issues, influenced policy change, and uplifted

underrepresented voices; Cheryl Wills, an Emmy Award-winning journalist, author, and trailblazer in broadcast media whose groundbreaking career, historical storytelling, and advocacy for social justice have made her a

powerful voice for truth, equity, and representation; Pamela McBride, a dedicated advocate and strategic leader in equal employment opportunity whose lifelong commitment to mentoring, diversity, and inclusion has fostered equitable workplaces and empowered countless individuals across military and civilian communities; Arrianee LeBeau, a multi-Emmy award-winning journalist and anchor known for her inspiring storytelling through the 'Heart of the City' series, her dedication to mentoring future journalists, and her commitment to uplifting communities across New York; Kendis Gibson, a four-time Emmy award-winning journalist recognized for his courageous reporting on historic events including 9/11 and major national elections, his influential work across top networks such as ABC and CNN, and his commitment to community service through leadership on multiple nonprofit boards; Don Lemon, an award-winning American journalist and bestselling author, renowned for his impactful career at CNN where he served as a leading news anchor and commentator, and who continues to engage a broad audience through digital media as a prominent voice in journalism and civic discourse; Rochell Bishop Sleets, a trailblazing journalist and editor, currently serving as Editor and Chief Content Officer at Newsday, known for her historic leadership as the first Black woman to lead the publication, her decades-long commitment to fair, inclusive storytelling, and her dedication to mentoring the next generation of journalists; Maurice L. Williams, the transformative Executive Director of A Father's Love, a NYC-based nonprofit tackling fatherlessness and social inequities, whose own journey from incarceration to academic excellence fuels his impactful work in community empowerment, education, and youth advocacy; Coach Darlene, Founder and CEO of The Higher Level Method, a personal and professional development coach with 30+ years of experience helping individuals and organizations achieve transformative growth through holistic, results-driven strategies; Bryttnee Parris, a Grants Manager at the Ford Foundation advancing equity and justice by supporting disability rights and gender, racial, and ethnic justice initiatives, with a strong background in public service, policy advocacy, and community engagement; Eboni Bailey, an Associate Consultant and certified Project Manager at Memorial Hermann Health System, specializing in strategic planning and process improvement, while passionately advocating for community development, healthcare access, and economic empowerment for Black and Brown communities; Yvette Highsmith, a Regional Vice President at Community Health Center, Inc. with over 30 years of experience overseeing primary care and school-based health services, dedicated to advancing racial and ethnic health equity and improving access to quality care for vulnerable communities; Phil Andrews, President of the Long Island African American Chamber of Commerce, founder of 100 Black Men of Eastern New York, and a prominent community leader recognized for advancing mentoring, diversity, equity, inclusion, and economic development across Eastern New York; and Tevin Foster, a passionate filmmaker and photographer, owner of Hazy Sun Production, known for directing impactful documentaries that highlight untold stories and foster community understanding, while balancing his creative career with family life; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor influential Black authors upon the occasion of special recognition

at the Black Authors Festival in Sag Harbor, New York on August 2, 2025; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the aforementioned honorees and the Black Authors Festival Board.