Assembly Resolution No. 917

BY: M. of A. Bronson

CONGRATULATING Deborah Hughes upon the occasion of her retirement after many years of distinguished service as President and CEO of the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House in Rochester, New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished individuals whose professional lives have been marked by exceptional service, leadership, and dedication to the cultural, civic, and democratic 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 congratulate Deborah Hughes upon the occasion of her retirement after many years of distinguished service as President and CEO of the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House in Rochester, New York, to be celebrated on Wednesday, February 11, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Hughes retired at the conclusion of December 2025, after 18 years of extraordinary service as President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, a position she has held since 2007, with transition support continuing into early 2026; and

WHEREAS, Prior to her tenure at the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, Deborah Hughes devoted 25 years to service as an ordained minister in Presbyterian and American Baptist churches in New York and Michigan, exemplifying a lifelong commitment to justice, community, and public service; and

WHEREAS, Her distinguished professional background also includes service as Vice President for Development at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School and as a member of the executive staff of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board in New York City, through which she developed deep expertise in nonprofit leadership, governance, and fundraising; and

WHEREAS, Initially envisioned as a short-term leadership role, Deborah Hughes's appointment evolved into an 18-year tenure marked by stability, growth, and visionary stewardship of one of New York State's most significant historic and cultural institutions; and

WHEREAS, Under her leadership, the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House achieved long-term organizational strength, including the stabilization of a balanced operating budget, the cultivation of a strong and engaged Board of Trustees, the growth of the museum's endowment, and the successful navigation of unprecedented challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Hughes steadfastly maintained the museum's commitment to authoritative historical interpretation, community

engagement, and relevance, presenting Susan B. Anthony's life and legacy with integrity, compassion, and nuance, while emphasizing Anthony's broader reform work in abolitionism, pay equity, education, labor rights, domestic violence prevention, and substance abuse reform; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, she has been the primary force behind the museum's ambitious campus expansion initiative, which envisions a new 14,000-square-foot interpretive center on Jefferson Avenue, museum-quality collection storage with proper environmental controls and fire suppression, expanded exhibit space for immersive and rotating exhibitions, research facilities for partnerships with regional museum studies programs, event and reception space, and the capacity to welcome significantly larger visitor groups; and

WHEREAS, Through her leadership of the "Susan B. Inspires Me!" campaign, the museum has raised significant funds toward the expansion project, secured a substantial New York State grant, and positioned the institution to begin construction in 2026; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Hughes has consistently articulated a belief in democracy, inclusive government, and the enduring relevance of Susan B. Anthony's work to contemporary social and civic challenges, while emphasizing the importance of presenting historical figures as full and complex human beings rather than untouchable icons; and

WHEREAS, She has expressed her intention to remain in the Rochester community following her retirement, reflecting her deep personal and professional commitment to the region and her appreciation for the vital role of community-based organizations in advancing the public good; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Trustees of the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House has credited Deborah Hughes as the guiding force and visionary behind the institution's growth and development, and has undertaken a thoughtful succession process to ensure continuity and future success, made possible by the strong foundation she established; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Hughes retires at a moment when the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House is stable, respected, and well-positioned for its next phase of growth, a testament to her exemplary leadership and enduring legacy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to congratulate Deborah Hughes upon the occasion of her retirement, and to commend her for 18 years of outstanding service to the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, the Rochester community, and the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Deborah Hughes.