

2013-J335

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Robert M. Best, 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, Robert M. Best of Binghamton, New York, died on Wednesday, October 10, 2012, at the age of 90; and

WHEREAS, Born in Newcomerstown, Ohio, in 1922, Robert M. Best was the son of the late Beatrice Mulvane Best and Chester R. Best; and

WHEREAS, In 1942, Robert M. Best enlisted in the United States Navy and was separated from active duty with the rank of Lieutenant in 1946; he continued in the active reserve until 1954; he met his first wife, the late Roselyn Welton, when they were both students at Ohio Wesleyan University; and

WHEREAS, Robert M. Best graduated from The Ohio State University in 1947, and spent his entire working life in the insurance business, retiring in 1990 from Security Mutual Life as Chairman of the Board; he was also a former CEO; and

WHEREAS, Robert M. Best distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man served as Chairman of two affiliated companies, Home Mutual Insurance Company and Security Equity Life Insurance Company; he served as the director of several companies, including Utica Mutual, Republic Franklin, Graphic Arts Mutual, New York Marine and General, Marine Midland Bank, Buckingham Manufacturing, and Universal Instrument Company; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Robert M. Best served the insurance industry as President of the Life Insurance Council of New York, Chairman of the Medical Index Bureau, Director of the American Council of Life Insurance, a member of the State Insurance Board, Trustee of the New York State Guarantee Corporation, and a life Trustee of the American College;

and

WHEREAS, He was a member of the New York Joint Labor Management Committee, the New York Commission on Insurance and Banking Regulatory Reform, Board of Governors-International Insurance Seminars, and Chairman of the New York Business Council Insurance Fund; and

WHEREAS, A dedicated community servant who lent his time and talents to many organizations and who was known as a leader of leaders, Robert M. Best served as President of the Broome County Chamber of Commerce, President of the State Chamber, and a founding Director of the New York State Business Council; moreover, he was the founding Chairman of the Harpur Forum, Chairman of the Broome County Performing Arts Center, Director of the Tri-Cities Opera, and Director of United Health Services (UHS); and

WHEREAS, UHS credits Robert M. Best as the principal community leader in the organization's successful efforts to bring open heart surgery to Binghamton in the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, The Robert M. Best Center for Cardiac Services is located at UHS's General Hospital facility in Binghamton, New York; and

WHEREAS, Robert M. Best also served for many years as an important advisor to Senator Warren M. Anderson on economic development, higher education and other issues; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Robert M. Best served as Director of Roberson Museum and Science Center, and a member of Binghamton University (BU)

Council; he was one of the supporters for BU to create Thomas J. Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science in 1983; he was also a founding chair of the Harpur Forum and a regent for the New York State Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, Robert M. Best had the foresight to recognize the need for a school of engineering and applied science, which today, has become one of the best in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Robert M. Best was President of UHS Foundation, a founding Director of Broome Community Charities and a member of the State Board of Regents; he was a congregant of Trinity Memorial Church and its vestry, the Binghamton Club, the Putting Academy, the 21 Club, and the Oteyowka Club; he was a past member of the Binghamton Country Club, Binghamton Rotary Club, and the University Club of New York; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous awards, Robert M. Best was honored

as a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Mason in 1975; received the Man of the Year Award from Sertoma Club, Hall of Fame Congress American Legion Post 80, State of Israel Peace Medal 1980, Huebner Gold Medal American College, and Alumni Citizenship Award from Ohio State University in 1983, Citizenship Award Binghamton University Alumni 1984, Distinguished Citizenship Award Susquehanna Council Boy Scouts of America, the New York State Governor's Arts Award, Commitment to Community Award New York State Business Council, and Free Enterprise Award all in 1985, Distinguished Citizen's Award, SUNY Board of Trustees and Public Service Award - B'nai B'rith in 1987, and the University Medal from Binghamton University in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by three brothers-in-law, Fred Smith, Donald Addy, and Dr. Donald Kopes, Robert M. Best is survived by his loving wife, Shirley Smith Best; and his family: son, Eric and wife, Ronna and their two daughters, Marissa and Leah; son, Grant and daughters, Linda and Christine; he is also survived by Shirley's family, Cynthia VanOstrand and her family, Karen (Randy) Bishop, Charles Stewart and his family, and Brenda (Richard) Smith and their family; in addition, Robert M. Best is survived by two wonderful sisters, Martha Jane Addy and Beryl Ann Kopes, Janie's son, Tom Addy (Kelly) and family, and her daughter, Jill Little and family, and Beryl's daughters, Jane Dixon and her family, and Karen Archer (David) and family, and four sisters-in-law, Wanda (Daniel) Chisarick, Marie (Paul) Benedict, Beverly (David) Conklin, and Miriam Smith; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Robert M. Best leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Robert M. Best, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Robert M. Best.