

2023-J1128

Senate Resolution No. 1128

BY: Senator COONEY

CELEBRATING the life of Michael Gamilla, renowned ImageOut Board Member and Programming Director, and beloved community member, colleague, and friend

WHEREAS, There are certain outstanding members of our community who, through their selfless commitment and dedication, have served to better the quality of life in our community and have had a measurable positive impact on the lives of its residents; Michael Gamilla was one such individual; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Michael Gamilla, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, A cultural icon in the local LGBTQ+ film community, Michael Gamilla of Rochester, New York, died on March 9, 2023, at the age of 54; and

WHEREAS, With a sincere passion for LGBTQ+ cinema, for two decades Michael Gamilla served as Programming Director of ImageOut: The Rochester LGBTQ+ Film Festival; in this role, he carefully curated films to bring the best in global LGBTQ+ cinema to the local screens; and

WHEREAS, Under his able leadership, the films offered visibility and representation of the LGBTQ+ community, telling diverse stories

regarding race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, religious identities, and more; and

WHEREAS, Born in Manila, Philippines, Michael Gamilla moved to the United States as an adult; upon settling in Upstate New York, his passion for arts and culture, and his desire to be active in the LGBTQ+ community led him to ImageOut, the Rochester LGBT Film Festival where he has been a loyal volunteer for 20 years and served as its Programming Director for the past 19 years; and

WHEREAS, A systems analyst and computer programmer by training and profession, Michael Gamilla's volunteer work with the film festival since 2003 allowed him to indulge his artistic and creative side; and

WHEREAS, After taking over the ImageOut programming helm, Michael Gamilla introduced the Flower City Flicks Competition for local filmmakers with the hope of inspiring more LGBTQ+ content coming from the Western New York and Rochester Region; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, he also created the ImageOut There! Series as a sidebar to introduce the festival audience to content that may be hard-hitting, challenging, edgy, and perhaps, even innovative, as opposed to the usual festival fare; and

WHEREAS, Michael Gamilla also renewed the festival's dedication to the leaders of tomorrow by adding an official youth series called Next Generation, with emphasis on including stories for, about, and/or by LGBTQ+ youth and making the films easily accessible to them; and

WHEREAS, At the start of the pandemic, Michael Gamilla spearheaded the effort to quickly adapt to the restrictions of in-person events and

ImageOut moved to a virtual-only platform for the first year of the pandemic; additionally, in 2021, at the time when most festivals were cancelling, postponing, or downsizing their events, Michael introduced ImageOut First Cut Spring Edition, which is now on its second year; and

WHEREAS, This new festival allows ImageOut to adapt to the new distribution model of films as the demand for streaming becomes stronger, so the Rochester audience is not missing out on good quality LGBTQ+ films; and

WHEREAS, An integral component to the vibrant international arts and culture community, Michael was invited to serve on international LGBTQ+ juries for film festivals in Berlin (Berlinale), Cardiff (Iris Prize), Toronto (Inside Out), Tel Aviv (TLVfest), San Francisco (Frameline), Miami and Fort Lauderdale (OutShine), Boston (Wicked Queer), Tampa (TIGLFF), Atlanta (Out on Film), as well as jury duties for the DC Shorts Film Festival and the Rochester 24-hour Movie Challenge; and

WHEREAS, Among his many honors, Michael Gamilla was a 2011 Little Theatre Friend of Film awardee, a 2015 Empire State Pride Agenda Outstanding Community Champion awardee, the 2022 ROC Pride Grand Marshal, a 2022 Rochester LGBTQ+ Together ROC Pride MVP at Rochester Red Wings Pride Night, the 2022 ImageOut Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, and a 2022 Rainbow Seniors ROC Evelyn Bailey Legacy of Pride Award recipient; and

WHEREAS, A truly charismatic, insightful and compassionate man, Michael Gamilla's tireless work built bridges throughout the community by connecting the hearts and minds of people, families, and allies, while trying to bring understanding and equality for all through the cinema; and

WHEREAS, Michael Gamilla's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through his family's vivid and happy memories; his insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives he touched; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Michael Gamilla leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing man; he will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life of Michael Gamilla, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Michael Gamilla.