

2023-J1597

Senate Resolution No. 1597

BY: Senator COMRIE

CONGRATULATING Gladys Simmons Barney upon the occasion of celebrating her 100th Birthday

WHEREAS, Senior citizens bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the increasingly active roles they play in today's society; their past contributions and future participation are a vital part of, and valuable asset to, the fabric of community life and activity; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to commemorate and recognize certain milestones celebrated by citizens of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to congratulate Gladys Simmons Barney upon the occasion of her 100th Birthday that was celebrated Wednesday, January 3, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Gladys Simmons was born to Victor and Annie Simmons in Government Gate, Pembroke, Bermuda, on January 3, 1924; she is the third of 12 children, six boys and six girls; she attended Central School in Pembroke but was unable to continue her education in high school because her parents could not afford the school's fees; and

WHEREAS, Although her dream to become a nurse seemed implausible in an era when Black women had limited career options, Gladys Simmons'

mother was determined to help her daughter realize that dream through assisting with household chores and aiding a neighborhood midwife with deliveries and postnatal care which gave her a foundation for an eventual career in nursing; and

WHEREAS, A teacher in Central School tutored Gladys Simmons and other students after school to prepare them for the Cambridge Junior Certificate examination; in 1943, after passing the examination, she moved into the Cottage Hospital Nursing Home's dormitory, residing there until graduating in 1947; she was one of five graduates that year and one of a substantial number of Black women who trained at the nursing school between 1936 and 1956; and

WHEREAS, Gladys Simmons was presented with her diploma by Sir Ralph Leatham; this event was historic because it was the first time that a governor had performed that role at the nursing home; the Government sent the graduates to Lincoln Hospital in Bronx, New York, for an additional year of training; and

WHEREAS, Returning to Bermuda in 1948, Gladys Simmons became a private-duty nurse, caring for wealthy Bermudians in their homes; being paid lucratively, she was able to afford trips to New York where she met her future husband, George Barney, whom she married in 1951; and

WHEREAS, The couple settled in Corona, Queens, New York, later moving to Cambria Heights where Gladys Simmons Barney has resided for 65 years; the Barneys were blessed with three sons, George, Jr., Mitchell, and Anthony; and

WHEREAS, Gladys Simmons Barney worked at Lincoln Hospital for eight years and Flushing Medical Center for 28 years; after her husband died

at the age of 53, she raised her family while working full-time, assisted by her mother who would periodically fly to New York; and

WHEREAS, Gladys Simmons Barney retired in 1987; in 2017, she was recognized for her contributions to the nursing profession at a dinner to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Bermuda Nurses Association; in Bermuda, she attended the Cup Match and renewed family ties; and

WHEREAS, Gladys Simmons Barney, with her zest for life, has inspired and enhanced the lives of her family and friends; and

WHEREAS, This exceptional centenarian has experienced the incredible joys and sorrows characteristic of and reserved for those with the stamina and courage to savor a full life; and

WHEREAS, Gladys Simmons Barney has enriched the lives of those around her through her joyous and sincere love for others and through the vibrant charm and infinite wisdom which comes only from a fullness of years; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to publicly recognize those who have reached such a remarkable age and who have witnessed and celebrated the innovations, cultural developments, and awesome achievements of this country during the last century, while themselves contributing to the growth and excellence of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to congratulate Gladys Simmons Barney upon the occasion of celebrating her 100th Birthday; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be

transmitted to Gladys Simmons Barney.