

## 2009-K64

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Boxing Hall of Famer and Ambassador Jose Torres, 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, Jose "Chegui" Torres, a former light-heavyweight champion who became a boxing official and a literary presence in the sport as a biographer of Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson, died on Monday, January 19, 2009, in Ponce, Puerto Rico, at age 72; and

WHEREAS, Revered both in Spanish Harlem and in Puerto Rico, Jose Torres was one of New York's renaissance men: world champion athlete, trend-setter, journalist and author; and

WHEREAS, Fighting professionally from 1958 to 1969, Jose Torres had a record of 41-3-1; he captured the light-heavyweight crown in March of 1965 when the referee stopped his fight with Willie Pastrano after the ninth round; after three title defenses, he lost the championship to Dick Tiger of Nigeria on a decision in December of 1966; and

WHEREAS, Jose Torres was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1997; he was the chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission from 1984 to 1988, becoming the first former professional boxer and the first Latino to head the agency, which oversees boxing in the state; and

WHEREAS, Jose Torres was the author of STING LIKE A BEE: THE MUHAMMAD ALI STORY (1971), and FIRE AND FEAR: THE INSIDE STORY OF MIKE TYSON (1989), and he wrote for THE NEW YORK POST and the New York newspaper EL DIARIO LA PRENSA; Jose Torres, a native of the Ponce, Puerto Rico area

and the son of a businessman, learned to box in the Army and captured the light-middleweight silver medal at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics; he earned his first boxing paycheck serving as a sparring partner for Sugar Ray Robinson in 1957; and

WHEREAS, Early in his pro career, Jose Torres became friendly with young writers, among them Pete Hamill, who was with THE NEW YORK POST; Pete Hamill helped Jose Torres get a column in the paper, and Jose wrote often on Latino community affairs; and

WHEREAS, When Jose Torres was introduced as the state athletic commissioner in November 1984 by Governor Mario Cuomo, his guests included Cus D'Amato, his former manager; Pete Hamill; Budd Schulberg, who wrote the epilogue to the Ali biography; and Norman Mailer; and

WHEREAS, Jose Torres cited Cus D'Amato as "the man who created the fighter" and Norman Mailer as "the man who created my intellectual capacity"; Jose vowed that as chairman of the athletic commission, he would promote educational opportunities for fighters "at least so they can read their contracts"; and

WHEREAS, Jose Torres, a member of the athletic commission before becoming its chairman, had also been active in societal affairs, working for Paul O'Dwyer when he was the president of New York's City Council and for Andrew Stein when he was the Manhattan borough president; and

WHEREAS, Jose Torres distinguished himself in his profession by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, Jose Torres' commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Jose Torres is survived by his wife, Ramonita; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Boxing Hall of Famer and Ambassador Jose Torres,

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 Jose Torres.