

2009-J1388

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Robert J. DeSena upon the occasion of his designation by District 21 of the United Federation of Teachers as the recipient of a District 21 UFT Community Service Award at its Annual UFT Scholarship Fund Dinner Dance on April 30, 2009

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those illustrious individuals of distinguished purpose whose lives have been committed to the pursuit of excellence in the education and quality of life of the youth of the Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to commend Robert J. DeSena upon the occasion of his designation by District 21 of the United Federation of Teachers as the recipient of a 2009 District 21 UFT Community Service Award; and

WHEREAS, Robert J. DeSena, Founder and President of the Council for Unity, will be honored at District 21's Annual UFT Scholarship Fund Dinner Dance, to be held at El Caribe Country Club in Brooklyn on April 30, 2009; and

WHEREAS, Born and raised in Brooklyn, Robert DeSena was, during his youth, involved with several street gangs, experiences which proved invaluable in his later work with at-risk teenagers; despite many obstacles, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. John's University and two master's degrees, one from New York University and the other from Queens College of The City University of New York; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, he became an English teacher; his skill in bringing contending ethnic and racial groups together led to the formation of the Council for Unity, which he founded at John Dewey High School in 1975; the Council's customized curriculum and program ideology created by Robert DeSena have earned the program a national reputation for its success in promoting unity, safety and achievement in schools and communities; and

WHEREAS, The Council for Unity has, for more than 30 years, worked under Robert DeSena's leadership and skillful guidance to replace a culture of despair in our children's lives with a culture of hope; it

now extends beyond Brooklyn to New York City's five boroughs, throughout New York State, across State lines and, increasingly, overseas as well; and

WHEREAS, Robert DeSena has, in addition, continuously expanded the Council's programs and services, which today serve youngsters from the third grade, through intermediate and high school and beyond, into college and adulthood; and

WHEREAS, He has also added an Adult and Family Partnership which engages entire families in the Council's mission, an innovative curriculum which involves law enforcement agencies in the Council's school and community based safety strategies and, in order to complete the circle necessary to break criminal and gang activity in schools and communities, Robert DeSena has designed and implemented a correctional facility model currently being employed in the Sing Sing Correctional Facility and the Suffolk County Jail with considerable success; and

WHEREAS, Under Robert DeSena's extraordinary stewardship, the Council for Unity has grown from a community-based organization in Brooklyn to one which now spans the country and extends all the way to Europe and Africa; he has fittingly been honored many times and has been featured in numerous publications and on a wide variety of radio and television programs; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention

it is appropriate to publicly proclaim and commend them for the edification and emulation of others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Robert J. DeSena upon the occasion of his designation by District 21 as the recipient of a District 21 UFT Community Service Award at its Annual UFT Scholarship Fund Dinner Dance on April 30, 2009; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Robert J. DeSena.