

2009-J3254

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Richard W. Sonnenfeldt, the chief interpreter for the American prosecution at the Nuremberg War Trials

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, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt of Port Washington, New York, died on Friday, October 9, 2009, at the age of 86; and

WHEREAS, Born in Berlin, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt was raised in Gardelegen, Germany; as chief interpreter, for the American prosecution at the Nuremberg War Trials in 1945, he personally interrogated and delivered the indictments to some of the most notorious top-ranking Nazi criminals, including Hitler's second-in-command, Hermann Goering; and

WHEREAS, After being selected as interpreter, United States Army Private Richard W. Sonnenfeldt helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp; and

WHEREAS, A past senior vice president at RCA and executive vice president at NBC, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt was one of the principal developers of color TV at RCA and computer technology for NASA, as well as the inventor of the video disc, a precursor to the DVD; and

WHEREAS, Later in his career, he became the Dean of the Graduate School of Management, Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, and served on numerous boards including Lee Enterprises; and

WHEREAS, A distinguished alumnus of Johns Hopkins University, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt was a life fellow of the IEEE; he was a member of the Council of Foreign Relations and the American Council on Germany, as well as a frequent lecturer at the Harvard Business School and MIT's

Sloan School of Management; and

WHEREAS, He was also an avid sailor, crossing the Atlantic three times in his 45-foot sailboat in his 70s; in 2002, he wrote his autobiography, WITNESS TO NUREMBERG, which was published in both Germany and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt often lectured about his war time experiences, time spent in a detention center and surviving a torpedo attack on a troop transport ship; and

WHEREAS, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt's commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his first wife, Shirley Sonnenfeldt, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt is survived by his second wife of 29 years, Barbara Sonnenfeldt; their six children, Ann (Sam) Goldberg, Larry (Barbara) Sonnenfeldt, Michael (Katja) Sonnenfeldt, Elizabeth (Michael) Holdstein, Catherine Hausman, and Marguerite DeNicola; and 15 grandchildren, Sara, Adam, Gillian, Andrew, Joya, Patricia, Margaret, Forrest, Alex, Peter, Ellen, Henry, Daniel, Isaac and Sophia; as well as his brother, Helmut (Marjorie) Sonnenfeldt, who was a National Security Council adviser during the Nixon administration; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit, imbued with a sense of compassion, and comforted by a loving family, Richard W. Sonnenfeldt 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 Richard W. Sonnenfeldt, the chief interpreter for the American prosecution at the Nuremberg War Trials; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Richard W. Sonnenfeldt.