

2009-K886

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Cecil K. Watkins posthumously upon the occasion of the dedication of a gymnasium in his memory

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, On Saturday, January 23, 2010, the Elmcors Board of Directors and Friends of Cecil K. Watkins will join together at the Louis Armstrong Recreation Center at 33-16 108th Street, Corona, New York, to honor Cecil K. Watkins, a co-founder of Elmcors Youth and Athletic Activities, Inc., and to celebrate his many accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, On this auspicious occasion, the late Cecil K. Watkins will be honored by the dedication of the Cecil K. Watkins Gymnasium in his memory; and

WHEREAS, A man who changed lives one at a time, Cecil K. Watkins was raised in the Bronx and South Jamaica; he played varsity basketball and baseball at John Adams High School and Adelphi University, where he earned a bachelor's and master's degree in sports administration and management; and

WHEREAS, Cecil K. Watkins served two years in the Armed Forces of the United States during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, After seven years as a playground director, Cecil K. Watkins began a successful youth program at P.S. 68 in Harlem; in the late 1950s he established the Ray Felix Summer League, which mushroomed into "City-Wide", the timeless centerpiece of summer hoops in the Big Apple; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Cecil K. Watkins was the co-founder of Elmcors Youth and Adult Activities, Inc. (Elmcors), named for the East Elmhurst/Corona area after his career move to P.S. 127 in East Elmhurst;

and

WHEREAS, Elmcors blossomed into one of the largest and most diverse community service organizations in America, offering services running the gamut from youth basketball and baseball to drug rehabilitation and senior citizens care; "The Cage" at P.S. 127 which featured Wilt Chamberlain, Connie Hawkins and Julius "Dr. J" Erving helped put the Elmcors organization on the map; and

WHEREAS, In 1978, after 20 years as a New York City Parks Department administrator, Cecil K. Watkins went to work full-time for the National Basketball Association, first as a supervisor and recruiter of referees and then as the Director of Community and Special Programs; an outgrowth of these duties resulted in the creation of the 26 NBA/Pro-Am City Leagues, for which he served as President and CEO; and

WHEREAS, Among the many citations and community service awards received by Cecil K. Watkins are: Adelphi University Hall of Fame inductee; Basketball Congress International Commissioner of the Year Award; Boy Scouts of America Recognition Award; Brotherhood Humanitarian Award; Elmcors Youth/Adult Activities Hall of Fame inductee; Governor of New York Outstanding Service Award; and City of New York Division for Youth and Courtsman Athletic Association/Citywide Community Service Award; and

WHEREAS, Cecil K. Watkins was also a member of the Courtsman Athletic Association Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Cecil K. Watkins revolutionized community hoops in New York City and nationwide; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Cecil K. Watkins posthumously upon the occasion of the dedication of a gymnasium in his memory; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Cecil K. Watkins and to Victoria Williams, Executive Director, Elmcors Youth and Adult Activities, Inc.