

2009-J3818

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending RAJE, the Russian American Jewish Experience, upon the occasion of its Second Annual Banquet on February 9, 2010, and honoring Sonya Bekkerman, Senior Vice President and Director of Sotheby's Russian Art Department in New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend organizations of high purpose and worthy accomplishment whose endeavors have a significant impact on the lives of those they serve; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend RAJE (Russian American Jewish Experience) of the Russian Division of Gateways, upon the occasion of its Second Annual Banquet, to be held at Sotheby's on February 9, 2010, and to honor Sonya Bekkerman, Senior Vice President and Director of Sotheby's Russian Art Department; and

WHEREAS, Since 1998, the Gateways Organization has dedicated itself to education in values and ethical living, and to reconnecting people with their Jewish heritage; and

WHEREAS, Nearly a million Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) have made their home in America, including thousands upon thousands in New York City and New York State, and given the opportunities of our great nation, many have flourished; and

WHEREAS, Yet the seeds of spiritual and communal destruction implanted by the Soviet regime helped create a crisis of Jewish and communal identity which, if left unabated, could jeopardize the survival of this important Russian American community; and

WHEREAS, To address this monumental challenge, the RAJE Leadership Fellowship was created to train and inspire a new generation of community leaders; and

WHEREAS, Sonya Bekkerman, Senior Vice President and Director of Sotheby's Russian Art Department, will be honored with the Torch of Freedom Award at the dinner; and

WHEREAS, Sonya Bekkerman is one of the leading figures in the highly competitive world of Russian Art; and

WHEREAS, She joined Sotheby's in 2000 and became a specialist in 19th century European art; and

WHEREAS, During her tenure in the European art department, Sonya Bekkerman began including important Russian paintings within the context of the European art sales, and in 2004, she founded the Sotheby's Russian Art Department in New York, to coincide with the record-breaking private treaty sale of the Forbes Collection of Faberge; and

WHEREAS, Sonya Bekkerman has published numerous essays in the field of Russian Art including those on painters Boris Anisfeld and David Burliuk, as well as on 20th century Russian women artists from the Thomas P. Whitney Collection for an exhibition at the Meade Art Museum at Amherst College; and

WHEREAS, Sonya Bekkerman has also contributed numerous articles on the state of the Russian art market to the Russian daily newspaper MOSCOW NEWS, Artnet.com, the Moscow State Tretyakov Gallery Magazine, GASTRONOMICA, and regularly contributes to Sotheby's PREVIEW magazine and most recently in 2009, published an essay on the work of Sergey Isupov; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, Sonya Bekkerman is a frequent guest lecturer for museums and organizations world-wide; and

WHEREAS, She holds master's degrees in American Fine and Decorative art from Sotheby's Institute as well as a Master of Arts degree from Williams College; and

WHEREAS, Sonya Bekkerman supports numerous not-for-profit organizations and passionately espouses Jewish causes; for a number of years, she has been working closely with her Sotheby's colleagues in Israel and most recently, studied Hebrew intensively at Middlebury College,

Vermont; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend RAJE for its purposeful endeavors and commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the rich religious, ethnic, and cultural heritage of the Russian American Jewish community which has become such a valued and integral part of the community of the City and State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend RAJE upon the occasion of its Second Annual Banquet on February 9, 2010, and to honor Sonya Bekkerman, Senior Vice President and Director of Sotheby's Russian Art Department in New York, recipient of the Torch of Freedom Award; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to RAJE and to Sonya Bekkerman.