

2009-J4876

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Ellen Burstyn upon the occasion of her designation for special recognition by the Rockland Family Shelter on May 2, 2010

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those individuals who devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Ellen Burstyn upon the occasion of her designation for special recognition by the Rockland Family Shelter at its 11th Annual Distinguished Citizen Award Dinner to be held at The Clubhouse at Patriot Hills on Sunday, May 2, 2010; and

WHEREAS, A woman of singular distinction, Ellen Burstyn has continually demonstrated extreme competence, extraordinary intelligence, and diligent leadership in her unwavering service to both her profession and community; and

WHEREAS, Widely known for her illustrious career in film, stage and television, Ellen Burstyn has been nominated six times for an Academy Award; in 1974, she won the Best Actress Oscar for her leading role in "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"; she also won the Tony Award that year for her starring role on Broadway in "Same Time, Next Year"; to complete the "triple crown" of major awards, she won an Emmy in 2009 for her portrayal of a woman with bipolar disorder in "Law & Order: SVU"; and

WHEREAS, Born in Detroit in 1932, Ellen Burstyn knew from a young age that she yearned for a large world; she left home on her 18th birthday, heading for the bright lights of Dallas where she became a fashion

model; however, New York was her ultimate destination; arriving with only a pocket full of change, she managed to continue her modeling career, supplementing her income with a run on the Jackie Gleason Show as a "Glee Girl"; beautiful, talented and ambitious, she decided Broadway was her next goal; and

WHEREAS, Fortunately for Ellen Burstyn, an acquaintance set up an audition and she found herself starring in "Fair Game" in 1957; throughout the 1960s, Ellen McRae (to become Ellen Burstyn) supported herself and her young son Jefferson by acting in television shows such as "The Kraft Mystery Theater," "Ben Casey," "Perry Mason," "The Iron Horse" and "The Doctors"; her film career took off in the 1970s with "The Last Picture Show", "The Exorcist" and "Alice," and continues unabated; and

WHEREAS, Early in life, Ellen Burstyn recalls wondering whether to become an actor or a writer; as it turned out she did not have to choose between the two; in 2006, she became a national best-selling author with the publication of her memoir, LESSONS IN BECOMING MYSELF; she continues to write daily and is currently working on a screenplay based on a World War II era heroine; and

WHEREAS, Today, much of Ellen Burstyn's professional time is devoted to the famed Actors Studio in New York where she is the Artistic Director and Co-President along with Al Pacino and Harvey Keitel; she teaches there once or twice a week, passing on her wealth of knowledge, experience and insight to a new generation of actors; she also lectures around the country on a variety of topics that always uplift and inspire the audiences she addresses; and

WHEREAS, Despite her busy professional life, Ellen Burstyn has been called upon to contribute her time and talents to countless civic and charitable endeavors and has always given of herself unstintingly; and

WHEREAS, Ellen Burstyn, who is an ordained Sufi Cheraga (minister), has a long-standing involvement with the Zen Peacemaker Community, whose mission is to alleviate suffering in the world through direct social

service, mediation, study and multi-faith cooperation; the Community's most well-known economic development project is the Greyston Bakery (originally founded in Yonkers) now the Greyston Foundation, which has provided jobs, low income housing, supportive services, child care and community gardens in the Westchester, New York area; and

WHEREAS, To support Rockland's own Dr. Bobby MacGuffie and her S.H.A.R.E. orphanages and hospitals in Kenya, Ellen Burstyn mounted a museum exhibition of her photographs which were sold to raise money for the purchase of a solar-powered oven; she found it remarkable to see art could be transformed into bread and sustenance; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Ellen Burstyn supports the Humane Society and local animal protection groups, American Forests as well as other organizations that promote the need to preserve and protect the natural environment; she also works with a variety of groups that help to nourish others through food banks and community shelters; and

WHEREAS, When Ellen Burstyn became aware of the Rockland Family Shelter and their incredible mission, she offered to help in any way; this was the beginning of an ongoing collaboration which grows stronger with each passing year; she has chaired the RFS Membership Drive, helping to raise significant funds for Children's Services and the Emergency Residential Shelter; she played a major role in the 30th Anniversary Celebration program at Riverspace, and led a riveting one-on-one conversation, co-hosted by RFS, with award winning director Deepa Mehta about her career, culture and violence against women; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the entire period of her community service, a period of constructive involvement, Ellen Burstyn has stood constant in dignity, good grace and humor; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individual for the benefit of others which Ellen Burstyn has displayed throughout her life; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a

long and sustained commitment to excellence certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Ellen Burstyn upon the occasion of her designation for special recognition by the Rockland Family Shelter on May 2, 2010; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Ellen Burstyn.