

2009-K1585

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION paying tribute to the life and accomplishments of Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, noted scholar and Director of the Kurdish Library and Museum

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, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour of Fort Plains, New York, died on Sunday, May 30th, 2010, at the age of 80; and

WHEREAS, Vera Marion Fine was born on March 27, 1930, in Barre, Vermont, to the late Harry and Gertrude Fine; she raised five children in a house on Shelburne Point, designed by her first husband, architect Marcel Beaudin; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, inspired by the late Burlington plastic surgeon and family friend, Bernard Barney, she packed up her four youngest children, age four to eleven, and embarked on a yearlong odyssey to Israel to discover her Jewish roots; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Saeedpour began attending the University of Vermont at age 40, and proved an exceptional student, earning a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and a membership in Phi Beta Kappa; she went on to earn a Master's degree in Philosophy in 1973, then moved to New York City to complete a doctoral program in Education at Columbia University's Teachers College; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, she met her second husband, Homayoun Saeedpour, a Kurd from Iran; an unsuspecting question from him about a definition in Oxford's English Dictionary in which Kurds were described as "predatory" led her to write a research paper entitled "Killing Them Softly," prompting Oxford and other major dictionaries to revise their defi-

nitions of the term; and

WHEREAS, Following Homayoun's death from leukemia in 1981, Dr. Saeedpour began her Kurdish work in earnest; she founded The Kurdish Program under the auspices of Cultural Survival, a publication of Harvard's Department of Anthropology; the program was designed to raise awareness of Kurdish culture and operated out of a Midtown office where Dr. Saeedpour worked as the Executive Assistant to Manhattan real estate developer Seymour Durst; and

WHEREAS, By 1986, Dr. Saeedpour had established the Kurdish Library, the first in the Western Hemisphere, on the parlor floor of a corner brownstone in Brooklyn's Prospect Heights; the Kurdish Museum followed in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the first Gulf War, which represented a milestone in raising American awareness of the Kurdish issue, Dr. Saeedpour led Jalal Talabani, the current president of Iraq, on a lecture tour to major universities and to Washington, D.C. to meet politicians and the press; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Saeedpour's letters to the editor were published numerous times by the NEW YORK TIMES, and most recently an article about the Kurdish Library appeared in the Habitats section of the NEW YORK TIMES entitled "The Home as Cultural Refuge"; and

WHEREAS, Her scholarly publications, THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF KURDISH STUDIES AND KURDISH LIFE are part of the collections of leading university libraries internationally, including Harvard, Yale, and her alma mater, Columbia University; and

WHEREAS, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour distinguished herself in her profession and by her sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of her community; and

WHEREAS, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour's commitment to excellence, and her spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour is survived by her brother, Max Fine; five children, Marc, Paul, Rebecca, Adam and Jeb; and two grandchildren, Jonah and Aaron, as well as five cherished cats; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit, imbued with a sense of compassion, and comforted by a loving family, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all she served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to pay tribute to the life and accomplishments of Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, noted scholar and Director of the Kurdish Library and Museum; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Vera Beaudin Saeedpour.