

2011-J356

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Apolinar Trinidad, legendary Dominican political activist and civil rights leader

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Apolinar Trinidad, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Apolinar Trinidad, affectionately known as Trinidad or Trini, died on Wednesday, January 19, 2011, at the age of 60; he was a fiercely independent leader largely credited with pioneering a movement for electoral empowerment and immigrant rights; and

WHEREAS, Born in Samana, Dominican Republic, on October 12, 1950, to Francisca and Aquilino Trinidad, Apolinar Trinidad migrated to the United States at the age 19; for over 27 years, Trinidad was employed by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal as a Rent Program Specialist advising tenants on the complicated maze of New York State housing laws; he graduated from Bronx Community College and later studied at Columbia University; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1980s, Apolinar Trinidad co-founded Latinos United for Political Action (LUPA), an independent civil rights organization dedicated to championing Latino electoral and immigrant empowerment; Dominican electoral aspirations were limited by high levels of noncitizenship, and in what has been described as a watershed for New York's Dominican participation, Trinidad organized a Dominican electoral front that resulted in the first Dominican representation to the Community Development Agencies (CDA) Advisory boards that permitted noncitizen voting and distributed a significant amount per year in anti-poverty funds to community groups; and

WHEREAS, Apolinar Trinidad later became a CDA official and was appointed as a representative on that board; that same year, he was

elected to New York City Community School Board 6 in Washington Heights;
and

WHEREAS, In 2000, Apolinar Trinidad brought a then relatively unknown candidate, Michael Bloomberg, to Washington Heights for a community breakfast at a local restaurant in order to outline his platform for the Latino community; Trini's activities were not limited to the electoral arena during this crucial period of activism in the 1980s and 1990s in the Latino community, but he would also engage in a whirlwind of activity in defense of immigrant rights; and

WHEREAS, As the City's demographics changed from a largely Puerto Rican to a more diverse Latino population, Apolinar Trinidad participated in efforts to curb police misconduct of all nationalities; as part of the Latino Coalition for Racial Justice (LCRJ), he helped to lead the protest against the police killing of Juan Rodriguez, a Dominican immigrant in Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, The slogan, "Hoy Por Juan Rodriguez, Manana Por Nosotros," (Today for Juan Rodriguez, tomorrow all of us) became a rallying cry in Latino communities throughout the city against police brutality; and

WHEREAS, Apolinar Trinidad's organization, Latinos United for Political Action, would pursue changes in major public policy initiatives; he held meetings and wrote appeals to former Bronx Congressmen Robert Garcia, who chaired the House Committee of the Census, to create a "Dominican" nationality check-off so that the city and state could gauge the growing number of Dominicans in the local communities; and

WHEREAS, Apolinar Trinidad presented a major policy address in 1988 to the Federation of Dominican Merchants in the Dominican Republic on economic development efforts between the Dominican Republic and the Dominican Diaspora in the United States, and also called on the United

States to pay reparations to the Dominican Republic for the invasion of 1965; Trini was an active member and union representative of DC 37, working to ensure that all workers obtained their economic rights and

were able to preserve their pensions and benefits from the city; and
WHEREAS, Later in his life, Apolinar Trinidad became an active member of the Unity Church and called on the Latino leadership along with his followers to embrace a divine moral compass that would give his community, caught in a political and economic crisis, a new spiritual foundation; and

WHEREAS, Through his persistent advocacy, Apolinar Trinidad was one of the behind-the-scene forces that laid the foundation for a new generation of leadership in the Dominican community and the City at large; a true asset to society, he fought for the human rights of people of every race, nationality, and gender; and

WHEREAS, Apolinar Trinidad is survived by his mother Francisca, his son Socrates, his brother Miguel and his grandchild, Adrianna Fatima; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit, imbued with a sense of compassion, and comforted by a loving family, Apolinar Trinidad 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 Apolinar Trinidad, legendary Dominican political activist and civil rights leader; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Apolinar Trinidad.