

2011-J3493

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION congratulating Willett Thomas upon the occasion of celebrating her 100th Birthday

WHEREAS, Willett Evelyn Smith was born to her parents, Gertrude and Wallace on March 19, 1912 in Macon, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, On Saturday, March 24, 2012, a centennial celebration in Willett Thomas's honor will be held at the Teen Challenge Center in Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, The oldest of three sisters, Willett Smith's earliest education began in a small school house known as the Walden School housed in the Rising Star Society house next to Mount Hope Church; she went on to complete her elementary education at Rutland Station School, a public school that housed grades one through seven; the school was located outside the city limits and miles away from her home; and

WHEREAS, Willett Smith attended high school at Hudson High located in the city limits of Macon, Georgia, but in order to reach the bus line, she had to walk a long distance and then take the bus through the city to the school; and

WHEREAS, After high school, Willett Smith went on to attend Georgia Baptist College to study business; at some point in her adult life, she moved to New York, and by this time, her sisters, Ida and Tempia were married and had already started families; and

WHEREAS, Time passed by and Willett Smith began working at the Brooklyn Hospital preparing food in the kitchen and serving in the doctors' lounge; she later met and married the late Nelson Brown and through this union, their son, Thomas was born; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately, Willett and Nelson soon divorced, but she did remain close to her son, mother, sisters and their children; Willett and her mother attended Apex Beauty College and at age 33, she graduated

with a license in Cosmetology; and

WHEREAS, One day, Willett met Leroy Thomas who swept her off her feet and they had a short courtship due to his being drafted by the United States Army during World War II; they were soon married and during his time away for several years, Willett spent lots of time with her mother and sisters; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, Willett Thomas' sister Ida passed away; by this time, Ida had four daughters and Willett and her mother helped to take care of them; and

WHEREAS, Upon Leroy Thomas's return from the War, Willett had some difficulty with her husband through his post war syndrome; however, they soon settled in and purchased a house, making a home for themselves and their son, Thomas; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her life, Willett Thomas wore many hats to provide for her family; with the purchase of their home, the Thomas's were able to provide apartments for rent, and Willett became the property manager while maintaining her full-time job; and

WHEREAS, By this time, Willett Thomas had become an Assistant Dietitian at Brooklyn Hospital, but continued to work the night shift; she had a strong work ethic and believed a young, strong, healthy body should work to the fullest, a steadfast philosophy her ancestors incorporated in order to provide for their families; and

WHEREAS, At the age of 54, Willett Thomas learned how to drive and earned her New York State Drivers License in 1966; as a devoted, prompt, and competent worker, Willett's superiors encouraged her to take advantage of new opportunities by enrolling in a number of on the job training sessions and certificate programs, thus landing her a job as a Nurses Aide at the Brooklyn Hospital; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, Willett Thomas' son took ill, becoming disabled; in the prime of her life at age 64, she continued to work the night shift while her husband, Leroy worked during the day; this schedule was truly

beneficial since one of them could be at home at all times to assist their son; and

WHEREAS, A few years after retirement, Leroy Thomas died in 1988; Willett kept busy as her job created a social outlet outside her home; however, she soon fell ill and was hospitalized; upon her dismissal, she returned home for an extended sick leave of six months; and

WHEREAS, Willett Thomas returned to work on her regular night shift only to find that she was unable to effectively do the things she had previously done in the past; she was later summoned to the office of her superiors where she was applauded for her dedication, attendance, and excellent work ethic over the years; and

WHEREAS, By this time, Willett Thomas was encouraged to retire; she had worked at the Brooklyn Hospital for more than 60 years, and in 1996, at the age of 84, she retired from the Hospital, giving her more time to care for her son and manage her rental property; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, Willett Thomas and her son, Thomas traveled back to Macon, Georgia to attend the funeral of her youngest sister, Tempia; while there, she walked around on the land she grew up on enjoying the view while visiting neighbors, friends, and her mother's grave; and

WHEREAS, Returning to Brooklyn after the two-week visit, Willett Thomas' son, Thomas was hospitalized on several occasions and underwent surgery; she then sought professional help in order to assist her in the daily routine of her son's care; over time, his health showed some improvement and they resumed their daily activities; and

WHEREAS, Willett Thomas was then invited to attend worship service at the New Faith Community Baptist Church; she and her son, Thomas looked forward to going every Sunday; they joined the church and became very active in church functions; and

WHEREAS, By the time she was 93 years old, Willett Thomas was unable to transport her son in and out of the house and had some difficulty getting herself outdoors, therefore, they spent more time at home; and

WHEREAS, In December of 2005, Willett's son, Thomas had passed; today,

she remains in good spirit enjoying each moment of every day, and is constantly cared for in her own home by the children of her sister, Tempia; she also enjoys going for rides and occasionally attends special cultural events and performances; in addition, she travels to Georgia to visit her sisters' families once a year; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to publicly recognize those who have reached such a remarkable age and who have witnessed and celebrated the innovations, cultural developments and awesome achievements of this country during the last century, while themselves contributing to the growth and excellence of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to congratulate Willett Thomas upon the occasion of celebrating her 100th Birthday; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Willett Thomas.