

2011-K1533

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 85th Anniversary of Temple Beth-El of Poughkeepsie, New York, to be celebrated on June 10, 2012

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, and the many spiritual, social and educational benefits they confer, play a vital role in the development of the moral fabric of a responsible citizenry; and

WHEREAS, It is the tradition of this State and this Nation to pay tribute to those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the ethical and spiritual values of their communities; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body takes pleasure in commemorating the 85th Anniversary of Temple Beth-El of Poughkeepsie, New York, to be celebrated at a Gala on Sunday, June 10, 2012, at Locust Grove in Poughkeepsie; and

WHEREAS, Temple Beth-El began with a band of 13 families from Poughkeepsie who were seeking a Conservative Jewish house of worship; these pioneering individuals included H. Albert, B.T. Braw, I. Fleishman, H. Goldstein, Dr. M. Katz, D.C. Klein, J. Lass, J. Perlmutter, H. J.

Rosen, Major R. Rosen, I. H. Spitz, and I. Tofel; and

WHEREAS, In 1925 and 1926, this group held Conservative-style services on the High Holy Days in a meeting hall offered by Mr. I. H. Spitz on the second floor of the Fallkill Building at the corner of Main and Washington Streets; and

WHEREAS, During the months that followed, this small group became increasingly attached to the idea of founding a new synagogue grounded in the values of the Conservative Movement; and

WHEREAS, In October 1927, the opportunity arose to purchase a building located at 110-112 Montgomery Street which had previously housed another religious group called The Society of Friends; and

WHEREAS, At a meeting held on October 9, 1927, with the 13 founders present, it was unanimously resolved to incorporate Temple Beth-El of Poughkeepsie, New York; these same parties signed the Certificate of Incorporation on October 31, 1927; and

WHEREAS, Major R. Rosen became the first elected President of the newly formed synagogue, and approximately a year later, the new building

was officially opened on Montgomery Street; and

WHEREAS, In 1935 Rabbi Abraham Haselkorn became religious leader of Temple Beth-El; he remained the synagogue's Rabbi until 1942; from 1942-1946, Rabbi Holtzer served as the synagogue's spiritual leader; and WHEREAS, Rabbi Erwin Zimet became the congregation's Rabbi in 1946, his notable tenure lasting for 40 years; Rabbi Zimet and his wife Lilli were contributors to Temple Beth-El's greatly expanded program of offerings, which included organization of both a High Holiday and a junior choir; and

WHEREAS, Lilli Zimet took on the responsibilities as principal of the synagogue's Religious School, overseeing a broad range of programs for pre-school children through high school seniors; and

WHEREAS, The congregation grew to 350 families by the mid-1950s while worshiping on Montgomery Street, and the synagogue's leaders recognized the need for a larger building; and

WHEREAS, In 1957, construction was completed and the congregation moved to Temple Beth-El's present home at 118 South Grand Avenue; and

WHEREAS, The congregation continued to grow, exceeding 800 families by the mid-1980s; during this growth phase (in 1967), the congregation hired Cantor Joseph Wieselmann; and

WHEREAS, Twenty-three years later, in 1990, Cantor Wieselmann was succeeded at Temple Beth-El by Cantor Rena E. Shapiro, the synagogue's first and only female clergy member to date; and

WHEREAS, Since August 2006, Rabbi Neal Joseph Loevinger has served as Temple Beth-El's spiritual leader; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, Temple Beth-El was awarded a multi-year STAR Synplex grant, one of just eleven synagogues in North America to be so recognized at the time; and

WHEREAS, The congregation began a three-year journey in which innovative and creative programming was developed to augment traditional Sabbath offerings and engage a broader share of the area's unaffiliated Jewish community; and

WHEREAS, Today, Temple Beth-El remains the region's largest Jewish institution; the vital congregation and its leaders continue to adapt to the changing needs and demographics of the community while maintaining the standards of Conservative Judaism that have clearly defined and distinguished it since its founding 85 years ago; and

WHEREAS, Temple Beth-El of Poughkeepsie stands on the threshold of tomorrow, prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades while retaining that spiritual resolve which characterizes its past; and
WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of enduring religious institutions and to bring such institutions to the attention of the people of this Empire State; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of Temple Beth-El of Poughkeepsie, New York, to be celebrated on June 10, 2012, fully confident that this commemoration reflects the belief in those values which enhance the dignity and purpose of life; and be it further
RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Temple Beth-El of Poughkeepsie, New York.