

2013-J1172

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Borscht Belt matriarch Helen Kutsher, distinguished citizen and devoted member of her community

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, Helen Kutsher died on Saturday, March 23, 2013, at the age of 89; and

WHEREAS, Helen Kutsher, a 1944 graduate of SUNY Delhi's hospitality program and the face of her family-owned resort in the Catskill Mountains for decades, spent much of her life in Monticello, New York, in a house on the grounds of Kutsher's Country Club; while the region was open to any and all visitors, the Borscht Belt was so named due to the largely Jewish-American clientele that made the Catskills the primary vacation destination for Jews in the northeastern United States; and

WHEREAS, Helen Kutsher's family owned Kutsher's Country Club for more than 100 years, maintaining the resort while other prominent ones in the area had closed down; the family still owns the resort, though it was leased three years ago to another operator; and

WHEREAS, Helen Kutsher and her husband, Milton, who died in 1998, operated the resort together; Helen focused on the upkeep of the resort and was its gracious hostess, while Milton handled the business side; and

WHEREAS, Many years ago, Milton Kutsher hired an athletic director, a young Red Auerbach, who went on to fame as the championship coach of the NBA Boston Celtics; in addition, he hired a young Wilt Chamberlain as a bellhop, and the couple stayed friends with the NBA Hall of Famer until his death in 1999; and

WHEREAS, The resort featured performers such as Milton Berle, Mel Brooks, Joan Rivers, Jackie Mason, Jerry Seinfeld, Harry Belafonte, Billy Crystal and Tony Bennett, celebrities that the Kutshers came to know well and could call on to entertain if needed; and

WHEREAS, Helen Kutsher distinguished herself in her profession and by her sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of her community; and

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

WHEREAS, Helen Kutsher is survived by her children, Mark, Mady and Karen as well as her seven grandchildren, Zach, Jennifer, Matthew, Rachel, Rebecca, Sara and Josh, along with her four great-grandchildren, Charlie, Eva, Brett and Samuel; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Helen Kutsher 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 mourn the death of Borscht Belt matriarch Helen Kutsher, distinguished citizen and devoted member of her community; and be it further

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