

## 2015-J46

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Seymour Perry Berger, father of the modern day baseball trading card

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, Seymour "Sy" Perry Berger, of Rockville Centre, New York, a man whose innovative designs and business savvy sparked the imaginations of millions of baseball-loving children and the boom for sports card collectibles, died on Sunday, December 14, 2014, at the age of 91; and

WHEREAS, Sy Berger was one of three children born to Louis and Rebecca Berger on July 12, 1923, in Manhattan's Lower East Side; he moved with his family to the Bronx when he was a young boy; and

WHEREAS, This esteemed man proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army Air Forces during World War II, after which, he attended Bucknell University where he received his degree in accounting; and

WHEREAS, While studying at Bucknell, Sy Berger became friends with Joel Shorin, the son of one of the founders of the Topps Chewing Gum Company; he was hired to work for Topps in 1947; and

WHEREAS, In 1951, Sy Berger helped take the company into the baseball-card market, and in autumn of that year, teamed with Woody Gelman to design the 1952 Topps Baseball Card set on the kitchen table of his apartment in Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, Sy Berger is credited with conceiving the prototype for the modern baseball card; he designed large, beautiful cards in brilliant color, which also featured team logos and autographs, as well as current and lifetime statistics; these basic design concepts are still in use

today; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his revolutionary work in card design, Sy Berger was a skilled businessman and negotiator; he became a fixture at major league clubhouses, working tirelessly to sign baseball players to contracts in his role as Vice President for sports and licensing at Topps; and

WHEREAS, As a result of Sy Berger's creativity and determination, the baseball card market continued to grow, selling millions annually by the time of the collectibles boom in the 1980s and 1990s; and

WHEREAS, After helping Topps dominate the sports card market for more than 40 years, Sy Berger retired from the company after a half century of distinguished service in 1997, after which time he stayed on as a consultant; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous honors and accolades for his outstanding work, Sy Berger was the subject of his own baseball card in 2004, as part of the Topps "All Time Fan Favorite" Series; furthermore, he was inducted into the National Jewish Hall of Fame in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Sy Berger is survived by his wife, Gloria; their three children, Maxine, Glenn and Gary; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion Sy Berger 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 Seymour Perry Berger, father of the modern day baseball trading card; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Seymour Perry Berger.