

2015-J275

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Ruth Garner upon the occasion of her designation as a recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Ruth Garner upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by a resolution in 2014 and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Born November 18, 1915, in Norwood, New York, Ruth Finnegan married her high school sweetheart, George Garner, and the couple raised six children; they opened a funeral home in Potsdam in 1947, running the business until 1980; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Garner's interest in public service blossomed through talks with her father, a station agent for the railroad, about current events; she became active in local politics in 1973, when she became the first woman ever elected to the Potsdam Village Board; and

WHEREAS, In addition, she was elected Mayor in 1977, but stepped down

in 1981 to care for her husband; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Garner became a steadfast and outspoken advocate for AIDS education and research after learning in 1985 that her son had contracted the disease; she has spoken often of the need for support groups to help loved ones of those suffering from AIDS; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Garner returned to the north country and served as the Mayor of Potsdam from 1993 until 2005; and

WHEREAS, Instrumental in the rebirth of downtown Potsdam, Ruth Garner is also credited with the rehabilitation of the old hydro dam; in addition, she oversaw the village when the Route 11 bypass was constructed; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of her service, Ruth Garner immediately returned to the Board as a Trustee and was appointed Deputy Mayor, a position she still holds today; she is believed to be the oldest serving elected official in New York, and is possibly the oldest elected representative in the United States; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her government service, Ruth Garner has been a Board Member of the Potsdam Public Library, the St. Lawrence County Historical Society, the Canton-Potsdam Hospital Guild, as well as the Potsdam Chapter of the Zonta Club and Renewal House, an agency which helps battered women; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, she was actively involved with the Merwin Rural Services Institute, Potsdam's Diversity Day Festival, and the New York Conference of Mayors; and

WHEREAS, Individuals such as Ruth Garner, devoted to improving the quality of life for others, enabling them to build lives of dignity and self-worth, are deserving of the highest praise and recognition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Ruth Garner upon the occasion of her designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New

York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Ruth Garner.