

2015-J261

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Robert Dwayne Womack, legendary singer, songwriter, producer, and instrumentalist

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay just tribute to those musical geniuses whose commitment and creative talents contributed to the entertainment and cultural enrichment of their community and the entire State of New York; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved this day to memorialize the purposeful life and career of Robert Dwayne Womack, a prominent figure in the history of American soul music, who died on Friday, June 27, 2014, at the age of 70; and

WHEREAS, Born on March 4, 1944, in Cleveland, Ohio, to Naomi and Friendly Womack, Robert Dwayne Womack, affectionately known as Bobby, spanned the American soul music era, touring as a gospel singer in the 1950s with the Womack Brothers, and was an active recording artist since the early 1960s when he began his career as the lead singer of his family musical group The Valentinos, as well as Sam Cooke's backing guitarist; and

WHEREAS, Royalty of the soul era, Robert Dwayne Womack's career spanned more than 50 years, covering a repertoire of music genres including R&B, soul, rock and roll, doo-wop, gospel, and country; and

WHEREAS, Nicknamed the Preacher for his authoritative, church-trained voice, and the way he introduced songs with long discourses on life, Robert Dwayne Womack wrote hit songs recorded by Wilson Pickett and the Rolling Stones, and composed music that broke onto the pop charts; and

WHEREAS, By the age of 17, Robert Dwayne Womack was the lead singer of his family-formed gospel group, The Valentinos, the youngest guitarist in Sam Cooke's touring band, and an emerging hit songwriter; in 1961, his song "Lookin' for a Love," a remake of a gospel composition, became

a modest hit for The Valentinos on the R&B chart; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, Robert Dwayne Womack produced his first major hit under contract with Sam Cooke's SAR label when he wrote, "It's All Over Now," and recorded it with The Valentinos, which consisted of him and four of his brothers; his song was slowly rising on the R&B charts when the British band, The Rolling Stones, recorded it, making it their first UK No.1 hit; and

WHEREAS, In 1971, Robert Dwayne Womack played guitar on, and helped produce, Sly Stone's most ambitious album, "There's a Riot Goin' On," now considered a soul classic; and

WHEREAS, After leaving The Valentinos, Robert Dwayne Womack settled into backup work for contemporaries such as James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Joe Tex, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix; his solo career began to flourish in the late 1960s and early 1970s; and

WHEREAS, In the 1970s, two albums Robert Dwayne Womack recorded for United Artists were considered soul classics including "Communication," which yielded the hit "That's the Way I Feel About Cha," and "Understanding," which included the song "Woman's Gotta Have It"; and

WHEREAS, In 1981, Robert Dwayne Womack released two of his most critically acclaimed albums, "The Poet," and its sequel, "The Poet II," which featured several duets with the soul singer Patti LaBelle; in addition, he joined The Rolling Stones to sing a duet with Mick Jagger, "Harlem Shuffle," which was on the Rolling Stones 1986 album, "Dirty Work"; and

WHEREAS, Robert Dwayne Womack's most recent 2012 album, "The Bravest Man in the Universe," is an avant-garde collaboration with a new generation of musicians, combining his old and new material with programmed beats, old gospel recordings, samplings of Sam Cooke, and other sounds;

the album earned favorable reviews on both sides of the Atlantic, and Rolling Stone ranked it No. 36 on its list of the 50 best albums of the year; and

WHEREAS, In addition to working with countless musical icons, Robert Dwayne Womack's admirers included Keith Richards, Rod Stewart, and Stevie Wonder, all of whom acknowledged their debt with guest performances on albums he made in his later years; and

WHEREAS, Many of Robert Dwayne Womack's songs were recorded by others including New Birth's "I Can Understand It," among others; as a singer, in addition to "That's The Way I Feel About Cha," and "Woman's Gotta Have It," he is most notable for the hits "Lookin' For a Love," "Harry Hippie," "Across 110th Street," and his 1980s hit "If You Think You're Lonely Now"; and

WHEREAS, This noted musician has received many awards and accolades, including a Grammy Award in 2011 for Best Short-Form Music Video: "Stylo" shared with Mos Def and the Gorillaz; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, Robert Dwayne Womack was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Formerly married to Barbara Campbell, as well as two subsequent marriages, Robert Dwayne Womack is survived by his daughter, GinaRe, who feels privileged to have been part of his life and rejoices in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to remember the life and accomplishments of legendary musician, Robert Dwayne Womack, whose illustrious career will forever live in the hearts of many and continue to inspire generations to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Robert Dwayne Womack, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Robert Dwayne Womack.