

2015-J276

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION celebrating the life and career of former New York State Governor Mario M. Cuomo, and expressing sincerest sorrow upon the occasion of his death

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those individuals of distinguished purpose whose lives have been committed to public service in the pursuit of excellence in the conduct of the legislative process in this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Mario M. Cuomo, three-term governor, died on Thursday, January 1, 2015, in Manhattan, at the age of 82; and

WHEREAS, Born in Queens on June 15, 1932, Mario Matthew Cuomo was the fourth child of Andrea and Immaculata Cuomo; unable to speak English, they came to the United States from the province of Salerno, south of Naples, settling at first in Jersey City, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, Mario M. Cuomo grew up in the Queens neighborhood of South Jamaica; as a young boy, he worked alongside his family members at the grocery store which they owned and operated; and

WHEREAS, In 1949, after graduating from St. John's Preparatory School in Queens, Mario M. Cuomo pursued his love of baseball and played on the freshman baseball team at St. John's University; three years later, at the age of 19, he signed a contract to play center field for the Class D Brunswick Pirates in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Due to an injury doing what he loved best, his baseball career was short-lived and Mario M. Cuomo returned to his studies, and graduated in 1953 from St. John's University where he majored in Latin American studies, English and Philosophy; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of a scholarship, Mario M. Cuomo enrolled in St. John's Law School; it was at this time, he met his future wife, Matilda N. Raffa, a fellow student; Mario and Matilda proudly raised

five children; and

WHEREAS, Mario M. Cuomo's first position as a lawyer was serving as the confidential assistant to Judge Adrian P. Burke of the New York State Court of Appeals, which he would reshape 30 years later by appointing all seven members, including Judith S. Kaye, the first woman to serve as chief judge; and

WHEREAS, Mario M. Cuomo joined a Brooklyn law firm, Corner, Weisbrod, Froeb & Charles, in 1963, and the following year, began his distinguished service to the public; and

WHEREAS, 1974 was the year Mario M. Cuomo entered politics and was named Secretary of State; in this capacity, he was responsible for numerous tasks some of which included settling strikes as well as mediating land disputes; and

WHEREAS, Four years later, Hugh L. Carey was reelected Governor of the State of New York, and Mario M. Cuomo was elected as Lieutenant Governor; and

WHEREAS, On November 2, 1982, at age 50, Mario M. Cuomo became the 52nd man to be elected New York's governor, defeating businessman Lewis E. Lehrman by approximately 180,000 votes; and

WHEREAS, A resolute leader and renowned orator, Mario M. Cuomo delivered the keynote address at the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, the speech which was the high-water mark of his national political career; and

WHEREAS, Deciding not to run for President of the United States, Mario M. Cuomo focused his political energies to the citizens of the State of New York and together with the Legislature, established a new ethics code which governed state and local officials and State employees; he proclaimed 1988 the beginning of the decade of the child, 1989 the year

to fight drug abuse, and when he won his third term as Governor in 1990, the year of the environment; and

WHEREAS, Following his extraordinary career in public office, Mario M.

Cuomo returned to Manhattan to work for the law firm of Willkie Farr & Gallagher, write books and give speeches; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his wife, Matilda N. Cuomo, Mario M. Cuomo is survived by his five children, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Dr. Margaret I. Cuomo, Maria Cuomo Cole, Madeline Cuomo O'Donohue, and Christopher Cuomo, as well as 14 grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Every citizen in New York State has most certainly benefited, in one way or another, from the deep dedication and caring concern Mario M. Cuomo brought to his work as their Governor, a leader and selfless public servant; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations in a moment of silent tribute to Mario M. Cuomo, whose generous and thoughtful concern for the welfare of others enhanced the lives of those so fortunate to have called him family, colleague and friend, 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 Mario M. Cuomo.