

2015-J1728

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 35th Anniversary of Mohonk Consultations, Inc.

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those prominent institutions of the State of New York whose actions have made a substantial impact on the quality of life in our communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of Mohonk Consultations, Inc. on May 7, 2015; and

WHEREAS, The Smiley family established the Mohonk Mountain House in 1869, and contributed immensely to the development of the Hudson Valley region into the international eco-tourism destination that it is today through strong environmental preservation efforts; and

WHEREAS, Since 1883, Mohonk Mountain House has served as a central meeting place for several important policy discussions, namely the Mohonk International Arbitration Conferences which were held between 1895 and 1916; these meetings are believed to have spurred the formation of several longstanding international peace organizations such as the American Society of International Law, the New York Peace Society, the World Peace Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; and

WHEREAS, The Smiley family and their partners at Mohonk effectively promoted an idea of a permanent international tribunal of arbitration which prompted the International Peace Conferences at The Hague, Netherlands, in 1899 and 1907, and the establishment of a permanent Court of Arbitration, more popularly known as the "Hague Tribunal"; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, with the assistance of his brother, Daniel Smiley,

A. Keith Smiley co-founded the Mohonk Trust, now known as the Mohonk Preserve, to encourage living in harmony with the earth, to promote public recreation and scientific research, and to address global environmental concerns; and

WHEREAS, A. Keith Smiley went on to form Mohonk Consultations Inc. in 1980 with help from Helen Vukasin and members of The Mohonk Trust, out of the longstanding tradition of bringing together a diversity of perspectives for the purpose of raising international awareness of a host of issues impacting our natural environment through the Quaker tradition of peaceful inclusiveness; and

WHEREAS, Mohonk Consultations has deep roots in the International Affairs Committee of The Mohonk Trust; Mr. Smiley, along with his wife, Ruth H. Smiley, developed foreign student programs, international development initiatives and environmental stewardship plans that were at the forefront of any such movements in the country; and

WHEREAS, In 1991, the organization created a model farm, referred to as the Phillies Bridge Farm Project, in Ulster County to train local growers and residents in sustainable agriculture practices; and

WHEREAS, With help from local volunteers, Phillies Bridge continues to be a vibrant spot in the community and encompasses five-acres of diversified vegetable gardens, a children's Discovery Garden and a blazed nature trail; each year, Phillies Bridge feeds hundreds of in-need community members and engages over 2,500 people through a variety education and outreach programs; and

WHEREAS, For 35 years, Mohonk Consultations has provided businesses, government and education leaders throughout the Hudson Valley with sound advice and guidance, collaborated with local colleges on social and environmental projects and engaged in dialogues with local farmers to

preserve our areas natural resources and develop strategies for the responsible use of our environment; and

WHEREAS, Mohonk Consultations' Board of Trustees have continually

honored A. Keith Smiley's vision of offering both a global and local approach to problem-solving based on the belief that "there is no substitute for dialogue," and that the people who carry out any project must be a part of their decision-making process; and

WHEREAS, This strategy has been preserved through annual community forums with themes ranging from Global Eco-Villages and Permaculture, to Water Wars and Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina to Breaking the Cycle of Lyme Disease; and

WHEREAS, In-depth discussions are held at conferences where issues of social concern such as Crime Prevention, What Water Crisis?, Global and Local Perspectives, The Transition Movement, The Future of Food Security, Hunger in the Hudson Valley, Meeting the Climate Challenge: Taking Action in the Hudson Valley and The Future of Family Farms in the Hudson Valley, among many other topics that have been discussed by professionals and concerned residents including students, seniors and municipal officials; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to pay due tribute to A. Keith Smiley, who passed away in 2001 at the age of 91, and to recognize those individuals and organizations who embody his work in the area of environmental stewardship, Mohonk Consultations presents an annual Distinguished Environmental Achievement Award to celebrate what is possible when a dedicated, committed force is willing to devote the time, energy and passion to protect our environment and communities; and

WHEREAS, Today, Mohonk Consultations continues the tradition of promoting peaceful dialogue and environmental awareness through the appreciation of all relationships of life on earth, and strives to connect people and the planet through public forums, conferences, recognition ceremonies and other forms of open meetings; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of Mohonk Consultations, Inc., and to recognize their distinguished service and environmental stewardship to

the Hudson River Valley; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Brad Berg, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Mohonk Consultations, Inc., and the family of A. Keith Smiley.