

## 2015-J2978

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION celebrating the Brooklyn gala exhibition and paying tribute to 83-year-old Otto Neals, Black Brooklyn Master, for his artistic contributions on June 20, 2015

WHEREAS, The Arts, in whatever form depicted, are central to human expression; they are truly a universal language and their contribution to the development of friendship and understanding among all peoples cannot be underestimated; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay just tribute to those whose creative talents and commitment to the arts contribute to the enrichment of their community and the world, and to pay homage to a man whose life of artistic accomplishment stands out as an inspiration to others; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to celebrate the Brooklyn gala exhibition and pay tribute to 83-year-old Otto Neals, Black Brooklyn Master, for his artistic contributions on Saturday, June 20, 2015, at Restoration Plaza, Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, Otto Neals was born in Lake City, South Carolina to Gus and Della Neals; at a young age, he and his family moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he studied commercial art at George Westinghouse Vocational High School; and

WHEREAS, A self-taught artist, Otto Neals studied briefly at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, during which time he was introduced to stone carving by sculptor Vivian Schuyler Key, who presented him with his first set of carving tools; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, the Prospect Park Alliance and Ezra Jack Keats Foundation commissioned Otto Neals to create a bronze sculpture entitled, "Peter and Willie", based on the works of author and illustrator Keats;

for this work, which is located in the Imagination Playground in Prospect Park, he was presented with the New York City Arts Commission's Award for Excellence in Design; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, other commissions include 10 bronze plaques for the Harlem Walk of Fame, a bronze sculpture for the Brooklyn Children's Center, a 20-foot mural for Kings County Hospital and a bronze portrait of the late Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton for the City University of New York; and

WHEREAS, Otto Neals has long been at the forefront of the Black Arts Movement, and he has been featured in several publications including BLACK ARTISTS OF THE NEW GENERATION, THE NEW YORK TIMES and EBONY MAGAZINE; and

WHEREAS, In addition, Otto Neals' work is currently being archived by the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and has been exhibited at such renowned locations as the Columbia Museum of Art, the Huntsville Museum of Art, the Ghana National Museum, the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Institute; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to those individuals who add strength, vigor and inspiration to the cultural diversity and quality of life in the communities of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, It is most fitting that we take time to celebrate the Arts of our Nation, to honor our artists, and to express our appreciation to everyone who patronizes the Arts; and as we celebrate the Arts, we celebrate and give thanks to our American freedom, the only atmosphere in which artists can truly create and in which art is truly the expression of the soul; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the Brooklyn gala exhibition and pay tribute to 83-year-old Otto Neals, Black Brooklyn Master, for his artistic contributions on June 20, 2015; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Otto Neals.