

2015-J3310

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending The Honorable Langston C. McKinney upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Ruger Award by the Onondaga County Bar Association

WHEREAS, It is the sense of the State of New York to recognize those esteemed individuals within our midst whose professional lives, personal endeavors and dedicated community service are an example and inspiration to their colleagues, friends, and family; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to hereby recognize and congratulate The Honorable Langston C. McKinney upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Ruger Award by the Onondaga County Bar Association celebrated at its 140th Annual Dinner held on Thursday, October 15, 2015; and

WHEREAS, The prestigious Ruger Award was named after the first President of the Onondaga County Bar Association (OCBA), who later served as Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals; the award is given to a judicial officer and is reserved for recognition of singularly outstanding achievement in devotion to the principles of our system of justice; since the creation of this auspicious award, only seven jurists have been named recipients; and

WHEREAS, Born in the southern United States, Judge Langston C. McKinney earned his Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Howard University in 1965; shortly thereafter, he was recruited to become a scientist in the Research and Development Division at Carrier Corporation in Syracuse; and

WHEREAS, In April of 1966, Judge Langston C. McKinney proudly became a member of the United States Army; upon his discharge from the military in 1968, he enrolled in the Syracuse University College of Law; and

WHEREAS, As a first-year law student, Judge Langston C. McKinney co-founded the Syracuse University chapter of the Law Students Civil Rights Research Council where he helped establish a new internship program in which students could earn credit for serving as legal representatives for those who are poor; and

WHEREAS, Judge Langston C. McKinney began his professional legal career at Onondaga County Legal Services, working diligently to provide free, civil legal assistance to low-income families and individuals in the Central New York community; and

WHEREAS, In 1971, Langston C. McKinney graduated from the Syracuse University College of Law, and two years later, joined the Hiscock Legal Aid Society, holding the position of Senior Staff Attorney; in 1979, he left to become a co-founder and partner at Maye, McKinney & Melchor, a general practice law firm in Syracuse, New York; and

WHEREAS, In 1986, Judge Langston C. McKinney was appointed the City of Syracuse's first African-American City Court Judge by Mayor Tom Young to replace retiring Mathilde Bersani; the following year, he was elected to a full 10-year term, and he would go on to win subsequent elections in 1997 and 2007; and

WHEREAS, During his 24 years of service on the Syracuse City Court bench, Judge Langston C. McKinney upheld his strong belief in the American system of justice and the rule of law upon which it rests, often expressing that nothing is more essential to good government under the rule of law than a free and independent judiciary which skillfully administers justice in a fair and balanced manner; and

WHEREAS, Judge Langston C. McKinney's numerous professional accomplishments include the establishment of New York's fourth drug treatment court in 1995 to provide treatment to defendant drug abusers facing

nonviolent crimes as an alternative to jail; he also advocated for more minority representation on city juries, and he regularly volunteered with neighborhood groups, schools, churches, civic and charitable organ-

izations in an effort to make Syracuse, New York, a better place to live; and

WHEREAS, Judge Langston C. McKinney has served on the Board of Directors of numerous organizations including the Boys & Girls Club, the Samaritan Center, the Boy Scouts of America, the Syracuse Community Health Center, and the Onondaga County Bar Association, as well as the Everson Museum; he is also a charter member of the New York State Association of Drug Treatment Court Professionals; and

WHEREAS, On December 31, 2010, Judge Langston C. McKinney retired from the Syracuse City Court bench after more than two decades of distinguished service to the people of Syracuse, New York; and

WHEREAS, Even though he is retired, Judge Langston C. McKinney has remained devoted to the principles of the justice system; he has been instrumental in the founding of the William Herbert Johnson Bar Association of CNY, the very first African-American Bar Association in Onondaga County; he also worked with a focus group to create the Onondaga County Bar Association's Diversity and Inclusion Committee; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Judge Langston C. McKinney has continued to serve as a mentor to many lawyers, teaching them how they can apply their knowledge and positions as lawyers to help enrich society; and

WHEREAS, For his outstanding efforts and dedication, Judge Langston C. McKinney has received many awards, such as the Faith A. Seidenberg Award from the New York Civil Liberties Union; in addition, the McKinney Manor housing complex was named after him in recognition of his many years of advocating for tenant rights as a lawyer; and

WHEREAS, It is the practice of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the quality of life in their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their profession, certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend The Honorable Langston C. McKinney upon the occasion of his

designation as recipient of the Ruger Award by the Onondaga County Bar Association; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Langston C. McKinney.