

2015-J3678

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Meadowlark Lemon, outstanding athlete, entertainer, sports icon, and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge outstanding athletes who distinguish themselves through their exceptional performance, attaining unprecedented success and the highest level of personal achievement; and

WHEREAS, It is with great sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of Meadowlark Lemon, noting the significance of his purposeful life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Meadowlark Lemon, a longtime member of the Harlem Globetrotters, died in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Sunday, December 27, 2015, at the age of 83; and

WHEREAS, Born in Wilmington, North Carolina, Meadowlark Lemon graduated from Williston Industrial School in 1952; after graduation, he was matriculated into Florida A&M University, however, he was drafted into the United States Army, where he proudly served his country for two years stationed in Austria and West Germany; and

WHEREAS, At the young age of 22, Meadowlark Lemon applied to become a member of the Harlem Globetrotters in 1954; one year later, he was chosen to play on the world famous basketball team; and

WHEREAS, The Harlem Globetrotters toured the world, breaking cultural and social barriers along with basketball records; they were the first team to play basketball in Europe; and

WHEREAS, Throughout their history, the Original Harlem Globetrotters have showcased their iconic talents in 120 countries and territories on six continents, often breaking down cultural and societal barriers while providing fans with their first-ever basketball experience; and

WHEREAS, In 1980, Meadowlark Lemon left to form one of his Globetrotters imitators, the Bucketeers; he played with that team until 1983, and then moved on to play with the Shooting Stars from 1984-1987; and
WHEREAS, In 1988, Meadowlark Lemon formed the Meadowlark Lemon's Harlem All Stars team; despite being with his own touring team, he returned to the Harlem Globetrotters, playing 50 games with them in 1994; and

WHEREAS, Meadowlark Lemon was the recipient of the 2000 John Bunn Award, an auspicious honor given by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame; three years later, he was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, During the 1970s, an animated version of Meadowlark Lemon, voiced by Scatman Crothers, starred with various other Globetrotters in the Hanna-Barbera animated cartoon series "Harlem Globetrotters", as well as its spinoff, "The Super Globetrotters"; the animated Harlem Globetrotters also made three appearances in "The New Scooby-Doo Movies"; and

WHEREAS, From 1974-1975, Meadowlark Lemon appeared alongside Fred "Curly" Neal, Marques Haynes and his other fellow Harlem Globetrotters in a live-action Saturday-morning television show; in 1978, he appeared in a memorable Burger King commercial, and in 1983, he was seen in a Charmin advertisement; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, Meadowlark Lemon starred in the educational geography film "Meadowlark Lemon Presents the World"; in that same year, he joined the cast of the short-lived television sitcom "Hello, Larry," and played Reverend Grady Jackson in the movie "The Fish That Saved Pittsburgh"; and

WHEREAS, A few years later, Meadowlark Lemon was featured in the Grammy-nominated video "Fun & Games," an interactive educational video produced by Optical Programming Associates and Scholastic Productions; and

WHEREAS, A born-again Christian, Meadowlark Lemon became an ordained minister in 1986, and received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Vision International University in Ramona, California, in 1988; he was also featured as a gospel singer within several Gaither Homecoming videos; and

WHEREAS, In the last years of his life, Meadowlark Lemon lived in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he and his wife operated Meadowlark Lemon Ministries, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to "changing lives, to change the world"; and

WHEREAS, Meadowlark Lemon is survived by his wife, Dr. Cynthia Lemon, and his 10 children, Richard, George, Beverly, Donna, Robin, Jonathan, Jamison, Angela, Crystal, and Caleb; and

WHEREAS, A gifted athlete, Meadowlark Lemon was a renowned role model in the sport of professional basketball; his character and achievements stand as a sterling example and inspiration to all who would aspire to success; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Meadowlark Lemon leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; he will be deeply missed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Meadowlark Lemon, outstanding athlete, entertainer, sports icon, and devoted member of his community, and to offer its sincerest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Meadowlark Lemon.