

2015-J4109

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Joseph Occhipinti upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the International Humanitarian Award by Gift of Life, Inc. on March 19, 2016

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality and character of life in the communities across New York State are reflective of the concerned and dedicated efforts of those individuals who would devote themselves to the welfare of the community and its citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Joseph Occhipinti upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the International Humanitarian Award by Gift of Life, Inc., to be celebrated at its 41st Anniversary Crusade of the Heart Gala on Saturday, March 19, 2016, in Garden City, New York; and

WHEREAS, For over four decades, The Gift of Life, Inc. has been saving the lives of children from third world countries through the miracle of open heart surgery; to date, more than 12,000 children worldwide have received this lifesaving operation through the dedicated efforts of this vital organization; and

WHEREAS, A native New Yorker, Joseph Occhipinti earned his bachelor's degree from Brooklyn College after attending night classes; and

WHEREAS, In January 1969, Joseph Occhipinti enlisted in the United States Army Reserves where he proudly served as a Military Policeman in the 812 M.P. Company at Fort Hamilton, New York; six years later, he was honorably discharged; and

WHEREAS, In March of 1972, Joseph Occhipinti joined the United States Department of the Treasury as a Customs Patrol Officer where he was assigned to investigate international drug trafficking and organized

crime in the New York City tri-state area; in this capacity, he compiled one of the highest felony arrest and contraband seizure records in Customs service history; and

WHEREAS, Two years later, Joseph Occhipinti was elected to the position of President of the Federal Agents' Police Benevolent Association; throughout his 18 years of service, he developed the association into one of the largest federal police organizations in the tri-state area; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Occhipinti was also credited with the introduction and passage of a New York-New Jersey law which granted peace officer status to federal agents; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, Joseph Occhipinti transferred to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and became one of the country's leading experts on ethnic organized crime and international smuggling; in 1979, he worked undercover, infiltrating a major Dominican drug cartel which led to one of the largest cocaine seizures in United States history; and

WHEREAS, In 1983, Joseph Occhipinti became the youngest agent to be promoted to the esteemed rank of Chief of the New York City Anti-Smuggling Unit, a position from which he officially retired in 1990; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, Joseph Occhipinti and his wife, Angela, established the National Police Defense Foundation (NPDF) where he currently serves as its volunteer Executive Director; the NPDF has grown to be one of the largest police foundations in the United States that has expanded internationally to 12 foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, Today, the NPDF is comprised of over 200,000 members and supporters worldwide; under the luminous guidance of Joseph Occhipinti this vital organization strives to "Protect and Support" the efforts of law enforcement through essential medical and legal support services

provided by the national law enforcement community, as well as several NPDF law enforcement programs involving public safety and child safety programs; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Occhipinti was instrumental in establishing the Safe Cop program which posts rewards for public information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone who shoots a member law enforcement officer; this successful reward program is credited for bringing many cop killers nationwide to justice; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man also established the internationally renowned Operation Kids program which has distributed over 250,000 free fingerprint/DNA kits to parents, posted rewards for missing children, established Project Pedophile, funded many youth athletic events and other related charitable endeavors for children, and granted over 75 scholarships to college bound students, as well as arranged life-saving operations and medical treatment to critically and severely handicapped children; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his distinguished career, Joseph Occhipinti has been the recipient of numerous national and international awards and accolades for his incredible service to his community and his profession including an award from the United Nations, the Sol De Oro Award from Ecuador, as well as three United States Attorney General Awards and 78 official commendations; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, Joseph Occhipinti was overwhelmed to be granted private audiences with both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Occhipinti has served on many executive board of directors, and is a vital member of the New Jersey Policemen's Benevolent Association, Fraternal Order of Police, American Legion, Federal Law Enforcement Association, New York Police Department and New Jersey Honor Legions, and many other organizations; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his loving wife of 43 years, Angela, and their three devoted daughters, as well as six treasured grandchildren, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individual for the benefit of others which Joseph Occhipinti has displayed

throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

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RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Joseph Occhipinti upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the International Humanitarian Award by Gift of Life, Inc. on March 19, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Joseph Occhipinti.