

2015-K1250

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 100th Anniversary of White Plains, New York, becoming a city

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the distinguished histories of the communities which comprise the noble body of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of White Plains, New York, becoming a city; and

WHEREAS, In 1683, early settlers from nearby Rye, New York, purchased 4,435 acres of land from the Weckquaeskeck Indians; the men labelled their purchase "White Plains," translating the Indian term "Quarropas" or white marshes or plains; and

WHEREAS, In 1721, 18 settlers were granted a patent to White Plains, from King George II; at that time, homes, churches and businesses had already sprung up along the Village Street, now known as Broadway; and

WHEREAS, In the first courthouse, built in 1758, the members of the Fourth Provincial Congress of New York, assembled on July 9, 1776, where they received a copy of the Declaration of Independence sent to them by the Continental Congress, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, This important document was referred to a committee of five, chaired by John Jay; after a favorable report from the committee, the Fourth Provincial Congress immediately approved the document, and instructions were sent to New York's delegates in Philadelphia to sign the Declaration of Independence; and

WHEREAS, That same day, the Fourth Provincial Congress also "Resolved and Ordered that the style or title of this house be changed from that of 'The Provincial Congress of the Colony of New York' to that of 'The

Convention of Representatives of the State of New York"; and

WHEREAS, On July 11, 1776, Judge John Thomas of Purchase, New York, stood on the steps of the courthouse in White Plains, and read the Declaration of Independence to the public for the first time in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Several months later, on October 28, 1776, General George Washington and his troops fought British and Hessian troops in the Battle of White Plains; this battle took place largely on today's Battle Hill and on nearby Dusenbury Hill; even though the Americans were forced to retreat, this key battle blocked the British campaign into Westchester County; and

WHEREAS, In 1790, the population of White Plains was 505, and by 1820, it had increased to 675, 113 of which were farmers who worked 5,300 acres of improved land, and raised 653 cattle, 150 horses and 426 sheep; and

WHEREAS, The 1824 edition of the GAZETTEER OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK described White Plains as "situated on a fine plain three quarters of a mile east of the Bronx Creek....and containing two churches, a court house and a small collection of houses"; and

WHEREAS, Two years later, the pivotal railroad reached White Plains and beyond; gradually businesses left the Village Street for the newly named Railroad Avenue (now Main Street) which connected the Village Street with the railroad depot; and

WHEREAS, A new court house was erected on Railroad Avenue in 1856, abandoning the site of the first two court house buildings on Broadway where today's Armory stands; by 1870, the population of White Plains exceeded 2,500 residents; and

WHEREAS, In 1866, White Plains was incorporated as a village, and five decades later, Governor Charles E. Hughes signed the bill granting White Plains Charter as a city in April of 1915; and

WHEREAS, Elections were held in November of 1915, resulting in the

election of Farrington M. Thompson with a 795 vote margin as Mayor of the city of 19,000 residents; councilmen elected were Joseph Allen, Charles H. Dewsnap, Frederick M. Garthwait, Frederick C. McLaughlin, John T. Rehill, and William J. Weiss; and

WHEREAS, As the county seat, White Plains became an important legal and banking center by the early 20th Century; in 1915, ground was broken for a new County Court House on Main Street, and soon thereafter, other large buildings went up nearby with tenants serving the legal and real estate professions; and

WHEREAS, With the influx of new businesses, the profile of Main Street was quickly changing; the new Municipal Building was dedicated on George Washington's birthday in 1925, and the Home Savings Bank opened at the end of 1925; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the Westchester Title and Trust at 2 William Street, opposite the court house, also began serving customers in 1925; the Spanish and Romanesque-inspired Lawyers Building at the corner of Church Street opened one year later; the impressive 10-story, \$650,000 Bar Building was the tallest in Westchester County; and

WHEREAS, In 1930, the Art Deco-style Northcourt Building (just north of the court on Main Street) opened in 1930, bringing more lawyers, architects and real estate agents to Main Street; and

WHEREAS, In addition to Main Street, other areas of White Plains were growing; The Westchester County Center opened its doors in 1930, and the new County Office Building and the new Grand Street Post Office followed in 1931; and

WHEREAS, Between 1966-1980, Urban Renewal changed the face of downtown White Plains, with 130 acres redeveloped to facilitate growth of a modern central business district; and

WHEREAS, By 2003, White Plains was undergoing a construction boom with \$650 million in new development underway; in 2010, 56,853 people lived in White Plains, and several hundred thousand people come into White Plains every day to work in corporate headquarters and offices, as well

as people involved in activities with the federal, state, county and local courts; and

WHEREAS, White Plains is also a center for shopping for Westchester County with many malls, retail shops, restaurants and theaters, as well as home of the Westchester County Center; the City also offers excep-

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tional educational, medical and cultural facilities; and

WHEREAS, Remaining fruitful over the ebb and flow of decades of growth and change, the City of White Plains, continues its commitment to enhancing the quality of life of its citizens, ensuring a positive business, institutional and educational climate, and providing all essential services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of White Plains, New York, becoming a city, recognizing the significance of the role it continues to play in the life of the community of the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Thomas Roach, Mayor, White Plains, New York, and the White Plains Historical Society.