

2015-J6243

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of James S. Cusack, founder of the Villa Veritas Foundation, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack of Kerhonkson, New York, died on June 5, 2016, at the age of 87; and

WHEREAS, Born on April 26, 1929 in Harlem, New York, James S. Cusack was the son of James S. and Delia (Smith) Cusack; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack was a veteran of the United States Air Force, having earned the rank of Sergeant; following his honorable discharge in 1952, he started on the road to recovery; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack began his career in 1965 when he founded Glenacre Lodge; it became one of the first rehabilitation centers of its kind; over many years, he was fortunate to be involved in establishing treatment as we know it today, including the founding of counseling credentials and helping to develop treatment standards both nationally and internationally; and

WHEREAS, Within these credentials, James S. Cusack received one of the first credentials and holds number 15; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack married the former Suzanne Boylston on August 7, 1972; the following year, he was given an opportunity to develop the program now known as Villa Veritas, Inc. in St. Josephs, New York; and

WHEREAS, Veritas Villa was the first freestanding facility in New York State to treat alcoholics and addicts together; in 1981, James and Sue relocated the present Villa to Kerhonkson, where they were received by

the community with open arms; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack was the recipient of the 1991 Counselor of the Year Award by the New York State Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, and later, the Governors Award; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack was an adjunct professor at Sullivan County Community College where he offered courses to aspiring counselors on alcoholism; he has been Vice President in Charge of Training for Mid Hudson ACA, Treasurer of the NYDS Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Addiction, past President and member of the Board of Directors, National Association of Halfway Houses, Inc., and past President of the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Council of Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man assisted in creating objectives and goals for the Hudson Valley Regional Council on Alcoholism, the Sullivan County Council on Alcoholism, New York Council on Alcoholism, and the New York Federation of Alcoholism Counselors; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack's mission was to help those in need to recover, find hope and reconnect with their families; he celebrated 63 years of sobriety and was a friend of Bill W.; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack published three books: BACK TO BASICS, ALWAYS AWARE and TROUBLE IS A GIFT; and

WHEREAS, He was truly a pillar in his community where he remained active up until his last days; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack was devoted to his family and friends and enjoyed traveling with them and seeing them often; and

WHEREAS, James S. Cusack was predeceased by his brother, Jack Cusack, his nephew, Jerry Cusack, a very special group of family members who he and Sue vacationed with, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, Elaine Cusack, Tom and Ann Lavery, Joan and Steve Lewis; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his wife, Suzanne, James S. Cusack is survived by his nieces and nephews: Patti and Justin Bobko, Steven Lewis and Harri Young, Kevin and Donna Cusack, Ken Lavery, Joan and John Cusack

McGuirk and Cindy Cusack; great-nieces and great-nephews: Allen and Amanda Lewis, Matthew and Justin Bobko, Danielle and Charlie Henning and their children: Liz and Charlie, Megan and Will Sakellaris, Joan and Brian Ross, Casey Cusack, Gerard and Michelle Sawicki and their children: Brooke and Abbey, Kate and Burke Hartfelder and their son, Will; sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Maureen and Dick Blair; dear friend and "brother," Les McCandless; stepchildren: Pat and Wally Smith, Elaine and Rich Held, Marge and Bruce Gerlach, and Bob and Barb VanderPlate, as well as his extended Villa family and friends; he will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, James S. Cusack 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; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of James S. Cusack, founder of the Villa Veritas Foundation, distinguished citizen and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of James S. Cusack.