

2015-J6514

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate, to be celebrated at his 90th Birthday Extravaganza "The Celebration of Living" on Saturday, August 13, 2016, at Robert Ross Johnson Family Life Centre, Saint Albans, New York; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, A resident of St. Albans, New York, Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. serves as the Pastor Emeritus of The Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church, Jamaica, New York; and

WHEREAS, After being called to the ministry, Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. began his illustrious religious career in 1972, when he was selected to lead the newly organized Bethesda Church after the untimely death of its founder; and

WHEREAS, On May 3, 1973, Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. was unanimously elected Pastor of the Church and immediately began negotiations with the owners of the property, First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica, to purchase their Hillside Center at 179-09 Jamaica Avenue where they had been worshipping; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure, Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. has been instrumental in developing and implementing numerous outreach and ministerial services which include mentoring several well known ministers for church leadership throughout the country, establishing programs for victims of AIDS and initiating voluntary services to feed the homeless; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his magnanimous career, Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades for his support of community causes and his fight for human rights and dignity; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, On Sunday, August 4, 1985, The Educational and Theological Consortium of the Eastern United States presented Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. with an Honorary Doctor of Divinity and on June 19, 2010, the title of Bishop was bestowed upon him by the Grace Saving Ministry; and

WHEREAS, Dedicated to his community, Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. served as a member of the York College President Advisory Counsel and the Human Rights Commission of New York City; he also held the title of Chairman of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission of Queens County; and

WHEREAS, Currently, this exceptional spiritual leader continues his active membership as trustee of many worthy organizations such as the NAACP and Clergy United for Community Empowerment, Inc., where he serves as Executive Secretary; and

WHEREAS, Singular in distinction is Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr., whose service to his church and his people, as well as his involvement in his community mirror a commitment of compelling dimension; he contin-

ues to be outspoken on issues which demand the spiritual community to focus on its duties: "To empower the community for economic growth and development, as well as provide youth with a foundation and vision for moral, spiritual and responsible leadership"; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout has been his wife, the former Arnella Anesta; his two sons, Keith and Charles II; and his five grandchildren, Zoe, Keisha, Amber, Charles III and Jason; as well as one great-grandchild, Keith Alexander II, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, Individuals such as Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr., devoted to improving the quality of life for others, enabling them to build lives of dignity and self-worth, are deserving of the highest praise and recognition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr. upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate, to be celebrated at his 90th Birthday Extravaganza "The Celebration of Living" on Saturday, August 13, 2016; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Bishop Charles Leslie Norris, Sr.