

2017-J579

Senate Resolution No. 579

BY: Senator LITTLE

MOURNING the death of Smith Brett Lawrence,
Vietnam veteran, Adirondack Guide, and beloved Santa
Claus to 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 endeavors
served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great
State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Smith Brett Lawrence of Keene, New York, died on June 30,
2016, at the age of 70; born to Smith and Mabel Lawrence, he grew up in
Keene, along with his sisters, Donna and Andrea; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, Smith Brett Lawrence graduated from Keene Central
School and went on to the Miner Institute in Chazy, New York, where he
majored in agricultural studies and lettered in wrestling; later, he
attended the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, New York; and

WHEREAS, Smith Brett Lawrence enlisted in the United States Marine
Corps in 1965 and served a tour of duty in Vietnam with a Marine Attack
Squadron; he was at Chu Lai during the January 31 Tet Offensive and
received a Good Conduct Medal in recognition of his service; and

WHEREAS, Following military postings in Hawaii and Chicago, Sergeant

Smith Brett Lawrence, who earned an E5 rank, was honorably discharged in November of 1970; and

WHEREAS, Upon leaving the United States Marine Corps, Smith Brett Lawrence followed three prior generations of his family by becoming an Adirondack Guide and earned an enviably low Adirondack Guide badge number of 309; for 18 winters, he drove passenger sleds at the Lake Placid bob run; and

WHEREAS, In 1973, after a six-month courtship, Smith Brett Lawrence married Mary Stambach at Saint Brendan's Church in Keene, New York; and

WHEREAS, Smith Brett Lawrence distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; his commitment to excellence, and his spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, For 30 years, Smith Brett Lawrence was an active member of the Keene Volunteer Fire Department; he was also a life-long member of the Keene Valley Congregational Church where he often served as a deacon and on new rector search committees; and

WHEREAS, Smith Brett Lawrence was a spirited member of the Keene Valley Rod and Gun Club and American Legion Post 1312 where he carried the flag and served on the honor guard; at this year's Memorial Day Service a bench was placed in his honor in front of the Vietnam War Memorial; and

WHEREAS, In addition, this remarkable man was active in both community affairs and in regional politics for many years; and

WHEREAS, Smith Brett Lawrence's greatest service was being Santa Claus for the last 40 years; he visited the Neighborhood House, area hospitals, Saint Agnes School, and often made house calls upon request; this year, Keene Central School honored him with the Honor Society Distinction Citizen's Award noting that he was "a graduate who has made outstanding contributions to our town, state, and nation"; and

WHEREAS, Smith Brett Lawrence is survived by his wife of 43 years, Mary; his two children, Bronson (Mike) and Molly (Jeordi); his grandson, Greggor Emmett; and his sisters, Donna and Andrea (John); as well as many nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Smith Brett Lawrence 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 Smith Brett Lawrence, Vietnam veteran, Adirondack Guide, and beloved Santa Claus to his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Smith Brett Lawrence.