

2019-J177

Senate Resolution No. 177

BY: Senator BRESLIN

HONORING Clifton Perez upon the occasion of being named a 2018 Distinguished Alumnus by the Hudson Valley Community College Foundation and Alumni Association on September 22, 2018

WHEREAS, The State of New York takes great pride in acknowledging its esteemed residents who have distinguished themselves in their profession and in their community; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Clifton Perez upon the occasion of being named a 2018 Distinguished Alumnus by the Hudson Valley Community College Foundation and Alumni Association to be celebrated at its Alumni Awards Brunch on Homecoming Weekend, Saturday, September 22, 2018, at the Bulmer Telecommunications Center, Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, New York; and

WHEREAS, Growing up legally blind never stopped Clifton "Cliff" Perez from setting big goals or achieving them; for 33 years, he has used his confidence to inspire others as an advocate for people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez's fight for advocacy and equal treatment began when he was a student at Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) in

the late 1970s; as the first legally blind student to attend the college, he impressed his professors and fellow students by joining the track team; he was also a sports photographer for the student newspaper, the Hudsonian; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez's influence helped bring about the first Office of Disabled Student Services at HVCC; today, this office has evolved into the Center for Access and Assistive Technology, which serves more than 650 students with disabilities each semester; and

WHEREAS, After graduation, Clifton Perez furthered his education by earning his master's degree in social work from the State University of New York at Stony Brook; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez's success has been a victory not only for himself, but for the countless others he has helped; as the systems advocate for the Troy-based Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley (ILCHV), he fights on behalf of people with disabilities for legislation and awareness on issues in transportation, employment, voting, housing, and more; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man has served on nearly 40 boards and committees dedicated to the cause, including National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL), and the New York State Human Rights Commission Advisory Council; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez was involved with the passage of, and became a federally certified trainer on, the Americans with Disabilities Act

(ADA), and has served on various ADA committees; he continues to educate others on rights for people with disabilities through numerous seminars

and trainings; he has spoken everywhere from high school classrooms to the White House, and has written extensively on the topic for news outlets and publications around the Capital Region and beyond; and

WHEREAS, For his steadfast and unrelenting commitment to securing the rights of individuals with disabilities, Clifton Perez was the recipient of more than 12 awards and accolades; most recently, he was inducted into the NYSILC NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Clifton Perez truly believes "When we the people make society accessible for and by people with disabilities, we will have an accessible society for all;" furthermore, he "believes strongly that if we can help people with disabilities have access to society, it will help everybody"; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the quality of life in their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their profession, certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Clifton Perez upon the occasion of being named a 2018 Distinguished Alumnus by the Hudson Valley Community College Foundation and Alumni Association on September 22, 2018; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Clifton Perez.