

2019-J744

Senate Resolution No. 744

BY: Senator RANZENHOFER

MOURNING the death of Richard J. Beyer, renowned professional wrestler, 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 endeavors served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Richard John "Dick" Beyer of Akron, New York, known throughout his professional wrestling career as "The Destroyer" and "Doctor X," died on Thursday, March 7, 2019 at the age of 88; and

WHEREAS, Born July 11, 1930, in Buffalo, New York, Richard J. Beyer was a four-sport athlete at Seneca Vocational High School who earned a football scholarship to Syracuse University playing right tackle and defensive guard; and

WHEREAS, It was during his time at Syracuse University that the 5'10", 230-pound Richard J. Beyer also made a name for himself on the wrestling team as heavyweight in the early 1950s; he competed at three Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association (EIWA) Championships as well as at Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) wrestling events in freestyle competition; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Beyer was a 1952 AAU Niagara District Champion and a three-time letter winner for Syracuse University (1951-1953); he was named Syracuse Athlete of the Year in 1953 for his performance on the wrestling mat and football field; and

WHEREAS, Upon graduating, Richard J. Beyer served as an Assistant Football Coach throughout the 1950s to head coach Ben Schwartzwalder; and

WHEREAS, In 1954, Richard J. Beyer launched a professional wrestling career that spanned four decades and 8,000 matches; he was best known by his ring names, "The Destroyer" and "Doctor X," in the Minneapolis-based American Wrestling Association (AWA)

WHEREAS, The first American to compete in All Japan pro wrestling, Richard J. Beyer worked extensively in Japan, and in 2017, he was awarded one of the country's highest honors, the Order of the Rising Sun; and

WHEREAS, In early 1963, Richard J. Beyer wrestled three sold-out matches against Shohei "Giant" Baba at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles, and in May of the same year he traveled to Japan for the first time to compete against Rikidozan in a match watched by 70 million television viewers; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Beyer returned to Los Angeles in June of 1964, during which time he defeated Dick the Bruiser for another WWA Title; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in 1973, Richard J. Beyer wrestled in Japan for six straight years with Giant Baba and NTV of Tokyo; during his tenure

in Japan, he had a feud with Mil Mascaras which resulted in a series of seven matches; furthermore, he was instrumental in the promotion of All Japan Pro Wrestling (AJPW) for Giant Baba, and established himself as a television personality in a late-night TV show called Uwasa No Channel; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his professional wrestling career, Richard J. Beyer served as a Physical Education teacher from 1984 to 1995, in the Akron Central School District, where he also coached football, wrestling and swimming; and

WHEREAS, The proud recipient of numerous awards and accolades, Richard J. Beyer was welcomed into the George Tragos/Lou Thesz Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2002; he also received the 2014 Zunic Award from Syracuse University; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Beyer is survived by his wife, Wilma; four children, Patti (Marc), Kurt, Mona (Chris) and Richard (Amy); eight grandchildren, Lisa, Kelly, Laurene, Brent, Garrett, Grace, Grant and Lucy; a great-grandson, Charlie; and a sister, Shirley; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Richard J. Beyer 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 Richard J. Beyer, renowned professional wrestler, 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 Richard J. Beyer.