

2019-J840

Senate Resolution No. 840

BY: Senator KENNEDY

MOURNING the death of Bernadette Hoppe, lifelong activist, college professor and dedicated member of her community

WHEREAS, There are certain outstanding members of our community who, through their selfless commitment and dedication, have served to better the quality of life in our community and have had a measurable positive impact on the lives of its residents; Bernadette Hoppe was one such individual; and

WHEREAS, Bernadette Hoppe, of Buffalo, New York, a longtime attorney and college professor, who produced a television show and documentaries, and edited a magazine for women, passed away on March 1, 2019, at the age of 54; and

WHEREAS, Bernadette Hoppe, affectionately known to many as Berni, was born in Poughkeepsie, New York; five days after graduating from Pine Bush High School, she entered the United States Army Reserve intending to enroll in medical school, but, for her, the military was not a good fit; and

WHEREAS, In 1983, Bernadette Hoppe moved to Buffalo and earned all her college degrees from the University at Buffalo; she completed her bachelor's in psychology and women's studies in 1987, master's in

American/women's studies in 1990, juris doctor cum laude from the UB School of Law in 2003, and master's in public health from the UB School of Social and Preventative Medicine in 2006; and

WHEREAS, Bernadette Hoppe distinguished herself in her profession and by her sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of her community; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable woman preferred to work with poor and underserved individuals and communities, particularly women with substance use disorders and pregnancies; her work in the field of HIV/AIDS was focused on women; and

WHEREAS, Early in her career, Bernadette Hoppe was a counselor at Haven House, then at Erie County Medical Center; she was the Marketing Manager and the Managed Care Administrator for the Geneva B. Scruggs Community Health Center, before accepting the position of Coordinator for Community Action for Prenatal Care; and

WHEREAS, Bernadette Hoppe started work as an adjunct instructor at UB in 1987; she also taught at SUNY Brockport and Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia; in 2006, she began teaching at the UB law school; and

WHEREAS, Starting in 1988, Bernadette Hoppe was host and producer of the 100-episode public access television show "Focus on Women"; in 1995, she co-founded Women's Gifts, an annual one-day market event, and in 1997, she became editor of the magazine her; she was also a player in "Ladies of the Lake" satirical theater troupe; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, she founded the law practice of Hoppe & Associates

Inc., which specialized in family law, especially for same-sex couples;
and

WHEREAS, In 2012, Bernadette Hoppe met her wife-to-be, Mary Van Volkenburg, on a beach at Windmill Point, Ontario, and the couple married on May 12, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Bernadette Hoppe's commitment to excellence, and her spirit of humanity, carried over into all fields of enterprise, including charitable and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, She was a board member of Neighborhood Legal Services, Squeaky Wheel, Northwest Community Health Center, New York State Perinatal Association and the Brazen Faced Varlets theater group; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, Bernadette Hoppe received a Women Helping Women Award from the Buffalo chapter of the National Organization for Women; she was named Divorce Attorney of the Year by the Volunteer Lawyers Project in 2013, and in 2014, was named both the Assigned Counsel Program's Family Court Attorney of the Year and the Women Lawyers Association's Woman Lawyer of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Bernadette Hoppe was a lifelong activist; after being diagnosed with Stage 3 cancer in 2015, she went to Albany to testify before the State Assembly Health Committee in support of the Medical Aid in Dying Act; and

WHEREAS, In her testimony on April 23, 2018, Bernadette Hoppe told the committee how much she had to live for; then she said, "Please give me, and those of us with terminal diagnoses, the ability to have hard, emotional conversations with our doctors, our families, our friends, and let us be the ones to make very private, personal and difficult

decisions about when and how we die"; she retired in 2018 to focus on her health; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her wife, Bernadette Hoppe is survived by her two brothers, Timothy and Michael Hoppe; and one sister, Anne Hoppe; and

WHEREAS, Bernadette Hoppe, who displayed many exceptional talents and unique qualities, was also extremely kind, considerate, accepting, tolerant, generous, smart, clever, creative, and loving; she will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations in a moment of silent tribute to Bernadette Hoppe, whose unselfish concern for the welfare of others enhanced the lives of those so fortunate to have called her family, colleague and friend, and to express its deepest condolences to her family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Bernadette Hoppe.