

2019-J3165

Senate Resolution No. 3165

BY: Senator PARKER

MOURNING the death of Little Richard, singer,
songwriter and musician

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to honor and pay just tribute to those musical geniuses whose commitment and creative talents contributed to the entertainment and cultural enrichment of their community, the State of New York, and the entire Nation; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to mourn the death of Little Richard, singer, songwriter and musician, who died on Saturday, May 9, 2020, at the age of 87; and

WHEREAS, Little Richard was an influential figure in popular music and culture for more than five decades, from the time he broke out in the 1950s to 2013, when he officially retired from the entertainment world; and

WHEREAS, A founding father of rock and known for his distinct vocals, Little Richard transcended boundaries in hits such as "Tutti Frutti," "Long Tall Sally," "Good Golly Miss Molly," "Keep A-Knockin'," and "Jenny, Jenny," most of which were recorded at J&M Studio in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, Born Richard Wayne Penniman in Macon, Georgia, on December 5, 1932, to Leva Mae (Stewart) and Charles "Bud" Penniman, Little Richard grew up in various A.M.E., Baptist, and Pentecostal churches where he sang in the choir; after leaving home at the young age of 13, he attended Hudson High School and worked at Macon City Auditorium where

he listened and learned to appreciate R&B, blues, and country music; and

WHEREAS, When he was about 15, Richard W. Penniman changed his name to Little Richard and performed at various locations such as the Tick Tock Club in Macon; after winning a local talent show, he landed his first record deal with RCA in 1951; and

WHEREAS, In 1955, Little Richard released "Tutti Frutti" and it became an instant hit, crossing over to the pop charts in both the United States and the United Kingdom; his next hit single, "Long Tall Sally," hit No. 1 on the Billboard Rhythm and Blues Best-Sellers chart, followed by a rapid succession of 15 more hit singles in less than three years; and

WHEREAS, Little Richard then decided to step back from rock n' roll and enrolled at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, to study theology; he then formed the Little Richard Evangelistic Team, and preached across the country; and

WHEREAS, During this time, Little Richard went on tour in Europe and with his unique voice and thrilling performances; his music appealed to many and truly united all races; he was admired by his fellow musicians as well, many of whom recorded covers of his works; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his music career, Little Richard dabbled in acting and appeared in various television shows and movies; and

WHEREAS, Little Richard was truly an icon and was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades for his innovating work; he was inducted into both the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame, received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Recording Academy and the Rhythm and Blues Foundation; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, "Tutti Frutti" was included in the National Recording Registry of the Library of Congress and five years later, Little Richard was presented with a Rhapsody & Rhythm Award from the National Museum of African American Music for his key role in the formation of popular music genres and helping to bring an end to the

racial divide on the music charts and in concert in the mid-1950s, changing American culture significantly; and

WHEREAS, Little Richard will always be remembered as one of rock n' roll's founding fathers; an inspiration to many, the architect and originator of rock and roll broke racial barriers and invented a whole new sound which truly changed American culture; and

WHEREAS, An inspiration to many, it is the intent of this Legislative Body to inscribe upon its records this loving tribute to the memory of music legend Little Richard, that future generations may know and appreciate his extraordinary and innovative career, and the respect and esteem in which he was held; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Little Richard, singer, songwriter and musician whose illustrious career will forever live in the hearts of many and continue to move generations to come; and be it further

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