

2021-K20

Assembly Resolution No. 20

BY: M. of A. Peoples-Stokes

MOURNING the death of George K. Arthur, prominent political leader, distinguished citizen and a major figure in the African-American community

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body, representing the people of the State of New York, is moved this day to pay tribute to an eminent man of indomitable faith and dedication whose public service and countless accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, George K. Arthur, a true pillar in his community of Buffalo, New York, died on Friday, December 25, 2020, at the age of 87; and

WHEREAS, A longtime former Common Council president and onetime mayoral candidate, George K. Arthur was active in local politics for more than 55 years and was a dominant force particularly in the city, where he fought for equality in housing and education; and

WHEREAS, This renowned Buffalo native also worked to promote unity in the city, advocated for economic and community development, defended the interests of the Black community, and sought to help cultural institutions such as the Nash House; and

WHEREAS, George K. Arthur served on the Common Council for 26 years, including a dozen as president before his retirement; he continued to work for Buffalo well into his 80s as a member of the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his illustrious career, George K. Arthur was a mentor to many aspiring young politicians; he also successfully cultivated and won support throughout the city as well as across demographics and the political aisle; and

WHEREAS, A friendly and personable gentleman, George K. Arthur was also tough as nails and fought hard for what he believed in; and

WHEREAS, Born on June 29, 1933 to William and Jayne Arthur, the future politician attended School 32 and graduated from Seneca Vocational High School in 1951, with a major in photography; he was drafted into the United States Army in 1953, proudly serving his country as a member of the Signal Corps until 1955, when he began night classes at the University of Buffalo's Millard Fillmore School; and

WHEREAS, George K. Arthur worked for nine months at Bethlehem Steel and then as a photo technician at PhotoTech Studios in Buffalo, before entering the political sphere in a race for the position of committeeman; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, George K. Arthur won election to the former Erie County Board of Supervisors as the Fifth Ward's representative; he served on that board until 1967, when he turned his attention to city

politics after the county board was replaced with the Erie County Legislature; and

WHEREAS, George K. Arthur lost his first attempt at the Common Council in 1967, but came back three years later to take the Ellicott District seat, which he held from 1970 to 1978, when he became Councilman-at-Large; during this time, he also worked as a narcotics counselor for the state Office of Drug Abuse from 1970 to 1976, and obtained a bachelor's degree in political science from Empire State College in 1977; and

WHEREAS, Perhaps most notably, George K. Arthur took on the inequalities he saw in the city's education system as the lead plaintiff in a school desegregation lawsuit, *Arthur v. Nyquist*, that was filed against the city in 1972; this federal lawsuit was decided in 1976, with the court ruling in his favor; and

WHEREAS, With a tireless and unwavering commitment to his community, George K. Arthur devoted his entire life to making the City of Buffalo a better place for all people; and

WHEREAS, This extraordinary man lived an immensely beautiful life built on compassion, kindness, and respect for others; he will be remembered as one of the most significant and enduring government and political leaders in the history of the City of Buffalo, and his insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love and hope to the countless lives he touched; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of George K. Arthur, and to express its deepest condolences to his family; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of George K. Arthur.