

## 2021-J347

Senate Resolution No. 347

BY: Senator BENJAMIN

MOURNING the death of Cicely Tyson, legendary actress, civil rights champion and powerful symbol of the Black is Beautiful Movement

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay just tribute to the memory of those prominent individuals whose creative talents have contributed to the entertainment and cultural enrichment of the citizens of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Cicely Tyson, a beloved actor of stage, screen and television, died on Thursday, January 28, 2021, at the age of 96; and

WHEREAS, In an extraordinary career spanning seven decades, Cicely Tyson was known for her portrayals of strong African-American women; she was the recipient of three Primetime Emmy Awards, four Black Reel Awards, one Screen Actors Guild Award, one Tony Award, an honorary Academy Award, and a Peabody Award; and

WHEREAS, Cicely Tyson was born to Fredericka (Huggins) and William Augustine Tyson on December 19, 1924, in Harlem, New York; and

WHEREAS, As a young model, Cicely Tyson took her first acting part on the television series "Frontiers of Faith" in 1951, and her first film role in "Carib Gold" in 1956; she broke barriers when she became

the first African American to star in a television drama, "East Side/West Side" from 1963-1964; and

WHEREAS, Cicely Tyson's first starring role on stage was Stephanie Virtue Secret-Rose Diop in The Blacks, which was the longest running off-Broadway non-musical of the decade, running for 1,408 performances; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the 1960s, Cicely Tyson built her acting resume appearing in numerous movies, television shows, and plays; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Cicely Tyson took on the role of Rebecca Morgan in the critically acclaimed film "Sounder", which she was nominated for both the Academy Award and Golden Globe Award for Best Actress, and won the NSFC Best Actress and NBR Best Actress Awards; and

WHEREAS, Cicely Tyson continued her award-winning streak when she played the lead in the television film "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman"; for her portrayal of the centenarian, she was the recipient of the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress - Miniseries or a Movie and an Emmy Award for Actress of the Year - Special, and was nominated for a BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role; and

WHEREAS, In the later 1970s, Cicely Tyson was nominated or won awards for well-known television roles which included Binta in the miniseries "Roots," Coretta Scott King in the miniseries "King", Marva Collins in the television film "The Marva Collins Story," and Muriel in the television film "Samaritan: The Mitch Snyder Story"; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the next few decades, Cicely Tyson continued her prolific career appearing in numerous television programs such as "The Women Of Brewster Place," "Sweet Justice," and "Oldest Living

Confederate Widow Tells All," for which she received her third Emmy Award, and "A Lesson Before Dying"; and

WHEREAS, Cicely Tyson also appeared in notable feature films such as "Fried Green Tomatoes," "Hoodlum," "Diary of a Mad Black Woman," and "The Help," which won the Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Acting Ensemble and the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture; and

WHEREAS, Cicely Tyson's theater career also continued to flourish; on June 9, 2013, Tyson won the Tony Award for Best Actress in a Play for her performance as Miss Carrie Watts in The Trip to Bountiful, making her the oldest recipient of this prestigious award; she was also the recipient of the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Actress in a Play and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Actress in a Play; and

WHEREAS, At the age of 90, Cicely Tyson took on the role of Ophelia Harkness in "How to Get Away with Murder," and was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series in 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020; most recently, she appeared in the Netflix movie, "A Fall From Grace"; and

WHEREAS, With style and dignity, Cicely Tyson truly served as a superlative illustration of the resolute spirit and bravery of the Black men and women who paved the way for future generations; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to the lives of those extraordinary actors of world renown who enriched the lives of others through their artistic endeavors; such an actress was Cicely Tyson, whose extraordinary and innovative career will forever live in the hearts of many and continue to inspire generations to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Cicely Tyson, legendary actress, civil rights supporter and symbol of the Black is Beautiful Movement; and to offer sincerest condolences to her fans, friends, and family members; and be it further

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