

2021-J631

Senate Resolution No. 631

BY: Senator STEWART-COUSINS

MOURNING the untimely death of DMX, legendary New York rap icon and talented actor

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

WHEREAS, It is with profound sorrow and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the passing of DMX, noting the significance of his inspired life and accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Earl "DMX" Simmons, a snarling yet soulful rapper who dominated the Billboard charts, releasing a string of No. 1 albums reflecting his gritty past and featuring his renowned gruff and unmistakable lyrical style, died on Friday, April 9, 2021, in White Plains, New York, at the age of 50; and

WHEREAS, Born on December 18, 1970 in Mount Vernon, New York, Earl Simmons was the first and only child of Arnett Simmons and Joe Barker; he and his family settled into the School Street Houses in Yonkers, New York, when he was five years old; and

WHEREAS, In the late 1980s, Earl Simmons began his music career on

the streets of Yonkers, performing as a beatboxer with a local rapper named Ready Ron before making a name for himself as a battle rapper in the early 1990s; it was during this time that he chose the name "DMX", which came from an instrument he had used at Children's Village, the Oberheim DMX drum machine; it was also later interpreted as "Dark Man X"; and

WHEREAS, DMX rose to prominence in the late 1990s with the Ruff Ryders; early on, his mixtapes helped build his popularity around New York City, and he began being featured on other rappers' releases, including LL Cool J's 1991 single "4, 3, 2, 1"; he was also on Mase's "24 Hrs. to Live" and the Lox's "Money, Power, Respect"; and

WHEREAS, By the late 1990s, DMX had a recording contract with Def Jam Records and quickly became the label's premier standout artist; his raspy growl of a voice was distinctive and immediately recognizable in households worldwide; and

WHEREAS, DMX struck gold in 1998 by releasing two chart-topping albums in the same year; he barked over the chorus of "Get at Me Dog," the breakout single from his debut album, "It's Dark and Hell Is Hot," which was released on May 12, 1998, and entered the Billboard chart at No. 1 as the album sold a quarter-million copies in its opening week; his second album, "Flesh of My Flesh, Blood of My Blood," was released on December 22, 1998, and was an even bigger commercial success, selling 670,000 copies in its opening week; and

WHEREAS, DMX rapped with an explosive cadence on his 1999 album "...And Then There Was X," which went multi-platinum off the success of

the monumental singles "Party Up" and "What's My Name"; furthermore, the raw "Ruff Ryders' Anthem" served as a tribute to his record label, and

he brought a more introspective, brooding delivery on "Damien," a story about making a murderous bargain with a demonic benefactor; and

WHEREAS, DMX titled a 2001 album "The Great Depression," with many of his most swaggering songs conveying hints of lingering trauma; he went on to release several more albums over the years, including "Grand Champ" in 2003, and "Undisputed" in 2012; although his music was often menacing and dark, it was also infused with Christian spirituality and he regularly ended his concerts with a prayer; and

WHEREAS, Known for his electrifying concerts and remarkable stage presence, DMX was truly a man of singular distinction, exercising sheer force of will to pull the spotlight down on himself and demanding the crowd's attention; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his extraordinary music career, DMX starred with rappers Nas and Method Man in Hype Williams's 1998 film, "Belly"; he appeared in the 2000 action movie, "Romeo Must Die" alongside Jet Li and Aaliyah, starred with Steven Seagal in the 2001 action film "Exit Wounds," and BET provided a closer look at his personal life with the 2006 reality series "DMX: Soul of a Man"; and

WHEREAS, Overcoming much adversity, DMX took the pain from his bleak childhood and the impact it had on his life to not only inform his music, but to write his memoir, E.A.R.L.: The Autobiography of DMX; and

WHEREAS, Throughout an extraordinary career which traversed more than three decades, DMX sold millions of records and was the first musician to have his first five albums reach No. 1 on the Billboard chart; and

WHEREAS, The recipient of numerous awards and accolades, DMX was

nominated for Grammy Awards in 2001 for Best Rap Solo Performance ("Party Up") and Best Rap Album ("...And Then There Was X"); he earned another Grammy nomination the following year for his single "Who We Be," and he won the American Music Awards' Favorite Rap/Hip-Hop Artists Award two years in a row, in 2000 and 2001; and

WHEREAS, Even after achieving world-renowned success, DMX never forgot where he came from; he donated immeasurable funds to the Nepperhan Community Center in Yonkers to support its programs and basketball tournaments, as well as Platinum CD's to inspire local youth; he also performed at Woodstock 99 and the Westchester County Center's first concert in 2006 alongside Swizz Beatz and the Lox; and

WHEREAS, A man of colossal talent, DMX was a brilliant artist and an inspiration to millions around the world; his message of triumph over struggle, his search for the light out of darkness, and his pursuit of truth and grace brought us all closer to our own humanity; and

WHEREAS, DMX was nothing less than a giant; his dedication to his music leaves an indelible legacy of inspiration which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to his family, friends and countless fans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the untimely death of DMX, legendary New York rap icon, 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 DMX.