

## 2021-J1138

Senate Resolution No. 1138

BY: Senator GAUGHRAN

COMMEMORATING the 25th Anniversary of the Amistad  
Long Island Black Bar Association

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to commend those illustrious organizations of the State of New York whose focus and intent have made a substantial impact on the quality of life in their communities; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association, to be celebrated at a Cocktail Party on Thursday, July 29, 2021, at the Oheka Castle in Huntington, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association, formerly known as the Amistad Suffolk Black Bar Association before it expanded to both the Nassau and Suffolk regions, was created to foster community, professional development, and growth among attorneys of color in the Long Island area; and

WHEREAS, The Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association actively provides supportive environments for law students, judges, and attorneys of color in all walks of the profession; and

WHEREAS, In the early spring of 1996, Robert B. Cox, Jr., J. Stewart Moore and Victoria Gumbs met with the only black judges in Suffolk County, the Honorable Marquette L. Floyd, New York State Supreme Court Justice, and the Honorable Peter J. Newman, Suffolk County District Court Judge to discuss the formation of a bar association of African American attorneys; and

WHEREAS, The three lawyers decided that advocating for political participation and parity needed to extend to the courts, since there were too few African Americans either as court officers, clerks, and judges; and

WHEREAS, Henceforth, the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association was formed, and since then, there has been an increase in diversity of court personnel in both Suffolk and Nassau Counties; Victoria Gumbs Moore was elected to the Suffolk County Family Court as the first African American and the first African American woman; Valerie M. Cartright was elected as the first African American and person of Haitian descent to be elected to the State Supreme Court; the Honorable Derrick Robinson, District Court Judge was elected to the State Supreme Court; Michelle M. Woodard became the first African American woman elected to the New York State Supreme Court in the 10th Judicial District; and Alonzo Jacobs of Islip was elected as a Suffolk County District Court Judge; in addition, there are numerous African Americans working throughout the law department; and

WHEREAS, For 25 years, the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association has held social functions with a theme and a purpose to celebrate

African American attorneys and leaders who impact the lives of the African American community; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, the organization has remained steadfast in its mission in the development of African American lawyers and being committed to legal issues of and concerning the African American community; Amistad holds an annual Day of Service Program on MLK, Jr. Day, sponsor a Constitution Day program at local schools in underserved communities, offers mentorship and internship opportunities to students, and prepares and mentors high school students who participate in a national oratory competition sponsored by the National Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, Amistad stands steadfast with other organizations in the furtherance of voter registration and election protection programs, advocating for legal and social reform which is free from racism and unequal treatment; and

WHEREAS, Since 2020, much of Amistad's attention has focused on the impact of COVID-19, the New York State Criminal Justice Reform legislation and social protest following the unjustifiable murders of Breona Taylor and George Floyd; recently, Newsday recognized several Amistad members among the 2020 Long Island Power 100, the leaders of Nassau and Suffolk; and

WHEREAS, Today, the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association consists of jurist, attorneys in a wide range of practice and law clerks; this vital organization will surely enjoy the same success which has so characterized its past; and

WHEREAS, The success of the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association is in direct correlation to the efforts of its dedicated members, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization

and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association is the result of a changing America, a changing Long Island, and was borne out of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s which was the precursor to the Black political movement of the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, There is a strong connection between the increased political activity within the black community and the present increase in the diversity of the courts, private law firms, various governmental and non-governmental entities on Long Island; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body that when individuals and organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association.