

2021-K458

Assembly Resolution No. 458

BY: M. of A. Morinello

MOURNING the death of Paul H. Baker, cultivator of the land and pillar of the New York State farming community

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

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker of Sanborn, New York, died on Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at the age of 73; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker was born on November 16, 1947, to the late Dorothy (Canfield) and Howard "Red" Baker in Niagara Falls, New York; as a child, he worked on the family farm, Baker Farms, in Ransomville, New York, where he learned to love agriculture which supplies mankind with a safe, healthy, affordable and abundant food supply; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Lewiston-Porter High School in 1966, Paul H. Baker earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Agriculture Economics and Marketing, before returning to Ransomville, New York, to run Baker Farms; later, he furthered his education by obtaining his master's degree in finance from the University at Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker sold the farm, and with an innate understanding of the vital role hardworking farmers provide for the State of New York, he took his passion for agriculture and its farmers to the Capitol in both Albany, New York, and Washington, D.C. serving as the Executive Director of Agriculture Affiliates and the New York State Horticultural Society for over 14 years and the Executive Secretary of the New York State Berry Growers Association for more than 12 years; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker also served as Chairman, board member and advisor on many agriculture organizations including the New York Apple Association, the International Apple Institute/UA Apple, the Western NY Apple Growers and the AMO; he was also an agricultural advisor for a New York Senator and held various agricultural advisory posts for several United States Senators and Congressmen over the years; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker was the spokesman for the New York State Horticulture Society at the United States Department of Agriculture and was instrumental in the development of the Grow NY program and the Becker Forum; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his decades of public service, Paul H. Baker worked tirelessly on the local, state, and federal levels addressing various issues pertaining to agriculture and individuals who owned and worked on the farms; he led the charge in obtaining funding for various organizations and was essential in obtaining over a million dollars for agricultural research in New York State; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker was a wonderful sounding board for growers and researchers; he was easy to approach and if he did not know the answer, he would work hard to find one; growers felt comfortable talking to him and he was always receptive to listening to their issues; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker was a resolute steward for the environment, and strived to help growers and farmers deal with a variety of labor and financial issues, knowing agricultural businesses are essential for the growth of agriculture in New York and across the country; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker is survived by his loving wife, Thea; one son, Brett Baker; three daughters, Elizabeth (David) Antonelli, Shannon (Ryan) Klar, and Nicole (Tim) Baker Burkholder; three sisters, Ann (James) Samplinski, Katherine (J. Anthony) Collard and Emily Baker; eight grandchildren, Cole, Tyler, Carter, Aubrey, Avery, Emma, Jack and Ciara; and many nieces and nephews, as well as former wives, Terri Argentieri and Sharon Hill; and

WHEREAS, A true friend to all American farmers, Paul H. Baker was always willing to lend a hand to help lift up the agricultural community; and

WHEREAS, Paul H. Baker, who displayed many unique qualities, lived an immensely beautiful life built on compassion, kindness, and respect for others; he will be truly missed by all those who had the privilege and honor of knowing him, especially his beloved family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Paul H. Baker, cultivator of the land and pillar of the New York State farming community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Paul H. Baker.