

2021-J1264

Senate Resolution No. 1264

BY: Senator MANNION

COMMENDING Dr. Stephen Thomas upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those individuals within the Empire State who have made strong contributions to their communities and who inspire others through their model citizenry; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Stephen Thomas has given not only of his time and energies but also of his competence, intelligence and leadership and consequently has been designated for special honor; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Dr. Stephen Thomas upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Stephen Thomas is a virologist and vaccinologist who

spent 20 years studying infectious threats with the United States Army; when COVID-19 began to spread in the States, he was put in charge of the COVID-19 incident command at the SUNY Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, New York, where he serves as its chief of infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to his community, Dr. Stephen Thomas has also served as an adviser to the County's Health Commissioner; under his able leadership, Syracuse was one of the earliest cities to house drive-up-testing and triage sites, where anyone showing signs of the virus would be tested by a phalanx of health care nurse practitioners; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Stephen Thomas' profound impact on his community's ability to respond to the virus has been truly extraordinary, earning him the admiration, esteem and affection of his colleagues and the residents of the State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Subsequently, in November of 2020, Dr. Stephen Thomas was appointed lead principal investigator for the world-wide Pfizer/Biotech vaccine trial; and

WHEREAS, Prior to his work in Syracuse, Dr. (Colonel) Stephen Thomas served as the Deputy Commander, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and WRAIR Chief of Virology, an Infectious Disease Consultant to the Surgeon General in US Army Medical Command, and the Director of Dengue Vaccine Development for the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences in Bangkok; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, Dr. Stephen Thomas was deployed in Jordan when he received a call from his wife that their two-year-old son, Cormac, had

died in a tragic accident; overcoming much adversity, this extraordinary man has continued to dedicate his life to serving and saving others, even while dealing with the grief that comes from enduring the loss of a child; and

WHEREAS, In honor of his beloved son, and in recognition of those who cannot be with their loved ones when tragedy strikes, Dr. Stephen Thomas spent each day during the outbreak in an intensive care unit filled with women and men struggling with the virus; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individual for the benefit of others which Dr. Stephen Thomas has displayed throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals 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 commend Dr. Stephen Thomas upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dr. Stephen Thomas.