

2021-J1677

Senate Resolution No. 1677

BY: Senator PARKER

MOURNING the untimely death of James Mtume,
renowned jazz and R&B musician and civil rights
advocate

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, This Legislative Body is moved this day to memorialize the
inspired life and career of James Mtume, who died on Sunday, January 9,
2022, at the age of 76; and

WHEREAS, James Mtume was born James Forman in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, on January 3, 1946; and

WHEREAS, As a young boy, James Mtume was constantly surrounded by
successful jazz and R&B artists due to his father and stepfather being
prospering musicians themselves; and

WHEREAS, The musician received his new last name "Mtume" after
joining a branch of the Black Power Movement; the name means messenger
or prophet in Swahili; and

WHEREAS, James Mtume pioneered a new pathway in music by creating

his own style which he referred to as "Sophistifunk," combining sounds from jazz, soul, and funk music to create something wholly unique; and

WHEREAS, In the 1980s, James Mtume formed an R&B group called "Mtume" which produced five best-selling albums and 11 top hits; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his career, Mtume collaborated with several jazz giants, including Duke Ellington, McCoy Tyner, Freddie Hubbard and Sonny Rollins; he also toured with Miles Davis for five years; and

WHEREAS, Featuring Tawatha Agee on lead vocals, the band's salacious 1982 song "Juicy Fruit" became a much-sampled tune, being used as the basis for at least 70 songs, most notably by The Notorious B.I.G. on his debut solo single, "Juicy," as well as by Faith Evans for "Faithfully," Keyshia Cole on her single "Let It Go" and Tamar Braxton on her hit single "The One"; and

WHEREAS, Mtume also scored soundtracks for films, like 1986's "Native Son," and served as music supervisor for the 1994 Fox cop drama "New York Undercover"; he also co-hosted the community talk series "Open Line," formerly on New York City's WBLS FM station, for 18 years; and

WHEREAS, James Mtume is survived by his beloved wife, Kamili Mtume; a brother, Jeffrey Forman; two sons, Faulu Mtume and Richard Johnson; four daughters, Benin Mtume, Eshe King, Ife Mtume and Sanda Lee; and six grandchildren Sukari Mtume, Yamani Mtume, Craig McCargo, Mazi Mtume, Aya Mtume and Jhasi Mtume; and

WHEREAS, James Mtume's 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 James Mtume, 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 James Mtume.