

2021-K523

Assembly Resolution No. 523

BY: M. of A. Bronson

COMMEMORATING the 100th Anniversary of the Legal
Aid Society of Rochester, New York

WHEREAS, In the course of the evolving development of this Empire State, if the ingredients of shared concern and responsive endeavor combine in the commitment to society, there have emerged among the distinguished citizens of the State of New York certain organizations which warrant special recognition; and

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 100th Anniversary of the Legal Aid Society of Rochester, New York, to be celebrated with a Gala on Friday, April 29, 2022; and

WHEREAS, The Legal Aid Society of Rochester, New York (LASROC) is one of the oldest Legal Aid Societies in the country; and

WHEREAS, LASROC traces its origins to the formation of the Rochester's Women's Educational and Industrial Union (W.E.I.U.) in 1893, which was founded in part by Susan B. Anthony to bring together diverse

women's groups in Rochester and provide a strong unified force, working to eradicate the many problems facing women of the era; and

WHEREAS, To facilitate their goals, the W.E.I.U. formed multiple committees, including a Legal Protection Committee dedicated to bringing the social and legal rights of women to public attention and assisting in all measures which may be taken to secure the rights of any who may apply; and

WHEREAS, Originally, the Legal Protection Committee's services were provided exclusively to women, and cases included wrongfully withheld wages, improper seizure of property, and refusal to deliver goods for which payment had been made; and

WHEREAS, By 1910, the demand for services of the Legal Protection Committee continued to grow to such an extent that it became necessary to maintain daily office hours and to rent space in a central location in the city; four years later, services were expanded to include both men and women, and applicants sought relief mainly in family matters, evictions, and small wage claims; and

WHEREAS, In 1918, the Legal Protection Committee had come to be known as the Legal Aid Bureau; it was incorporated into The Legal Aid Society of Rochester, New York in 1921, and became a charter organization of what was the community chest, later to become the United Way, founded by George Eastman; and

WHEREAS, In its early days, LASROC was an advocate for change in the legal system promoting pro bono services, and for a period of time, providing public defender services; during this time Emory Brownell served as Director and was fundamental in promoting family law reform, amendments to other New York State laws governing indigent persons,

unemployment compensation, and the establishment of Savings Bank Life Insurance; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its distinguished 100-year history, the Legal Aid Society of Rochester has provided direct legal services to low and moderate income residents in Greater Rochester and Monroe County; today, this vital organization continues to advocate for change and increase access to justice for all; and

WHEREAS, The success of the Legal Aid Society of Rochester is in direct correlation to the efforts of its dedicated staff, 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, This auspicious occasion presents an opportunity for this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to Legal Aid Society of Rochester, New York; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense 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 100th Anniversary of the Legal Aid Society of Rochester, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Legal Aid Society of Rochester, New York.