

2021-K571

Assembly Resolution No. 571

BY: M. of A. Gunther

CELEBRATING the life and legacy of William R.
Price, the first African American Fire Chief in the
State of New York

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

WHEREAS, Today, the seventeenth of February 2022, we are pausing to commemorate the life and accomplishments of William R. Price; and

WHEREAS, The unity of our State and Nation is built upon the compassion of individuals such as William "Bill" R. Price who upheld the values of community life and who, through their great actions, epitomized the best of humanity; and

WHEREAS, William R. Price distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, A true trailblazer, William R. Price was elected Fire Chief of the Silver Lake Fire Department of Wallkill, New York in 1973, during which time he broke racial barriers by becoming the first African

American Fire Chief in New York State and the fourth in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Under the luminous direction of William R. Price, racial disparities within the Silver Lake Fire Department seemed to disappear; he carried himself with quiet confidence and determined veracity, never allowing race to stop him from working towards the goals of his beloved department; and

WHEREAS, William R. Price began his illustrious career with the Silver Lake Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter, quickly climbing the ranks to become Lieutenant, Second Lieutenant and Chief; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, as grievance coordinator at Otisville Correctional Facility, William R. Price was prominent in orchestrating the New York State Burn Center in Albany, New York, and he was specifically sought out to serve on the Orange County Housing Advisory Committee to assist mid and lower income families secure better housing; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his steadfast and unwavering dedication to the Silver Lake Fire Department, William R. Price proudly served his country in World War II; and

WHEREAS, William R. Price exemplified leadership and integrity through his actions; his demeanor was gentle, his spirit was kind, and his care for others was apparent in the time and dedication he gave to bettering his community and those around him; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of this extraordinary man, the William R. Price Scholarship Foundation was founded in 2022 to assist students

within the Town of Wallkill School District, who possess exceptional character and a desire to advance through higher education; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individual for the benefit of others which William R. Price displayed throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, William R. Price's infinite selflessness and benevolence will shine on through his family's vivid and happy memories; his insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love, light and hope to the countless lives he touched; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, William R. Price leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing man; he will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life and legacy of William R. Price, first African American Fire Chief in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of William R. Price.