

2021-J2055

Senate Resolution No. 2055

BY: Senator JORDAN

CELEBRATING the life of Marylou Whitney, renowned socialite, legendary philanthropist and devoted member of her 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 woman of indomitable dedication whose public service and countless accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, Marylou Whitney of Saratoga Springs, New York, died on Friday, July 19, 2019, at the age of 93; and

WHEREAS, Born on December 24, 1925, in Kansas City, Missouri, Marie Louise Schroeder was raised by her father, an accountant, and her mother who loved equine and showed five-gaited Saddlehorses; after graduating from Southwest High School, she attended the University of Iowa for a time before working as an actress and in radio; and

WHEREAS, In 1958, after separating from her first husband, Frank Hosford, Marylou Whitney married Cornelius Vanderbilt "Sonny" Whitney, the grandson of William C. Whitney who purchased and built the current Saratoga Race Course in 1900; the couple teamed up to race horses, winning the Travers in 1960 with Tompion and again in 1968 with Chompion; and

WHEREAS, Marylou Whitney owned several properties, but her main residence was an old country manor sitting on 135 acres in Saratoga Springs, New York, called Cady Hill House, where she was renowned for hosting her annual late-summer gala on the eve of the Whitney Stakes at Saratoga Race Course; and

WHEREAS, Known as the Queen of Saratoga, Marylou Whitney is responsible for the iconic New York town's comeback, convincing NYRA to keep Saratoga Race Course open as a viable part of its racing calendar at a time when wagering and attendance sagged; her efforts and long-term vision continue to benefit racing, with the Saratoga meet attracting more than one million fans annually; and

WHEREAS, Beyond racing, Marylou Whitney was a founder of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center and helped establish the National Museum of Dance and Hall of Fame; she also worked to restore the National Museum of Racing, only a few blocks from the historic racetrack; and

WHEREAS, After Sonny Whitney's death in 1992, Marylou Whitney formed Marylou Whitney Stables which garnered industry-wide acclaim with her Eton blue and brown silks quickly becoming synonymous with racing excellence; her stable produced many champions, including Birdstone, the 2004 Belmont and Travers Stakes winner; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, in all, Marylou Whitney Stables earned nine graded stakes victories and campaigned more than 190 winners; and

WHEREAS, In 1994, Marylou Whitney met John Hendrickson, who was working as an aide to Alaska's then-governor Wally Hickel; they married in Alaska in 1997, and the couple continued their countless philanthropic endeavors, serving as founding members of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation and as founders of the Markey Cancer Center in

Lexington, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Always by her side, John Hendrickson also assumed the duties of President of Whitney Industries, which manages the family's lumber business and land holdings; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unrelenting commitment to her community, Marylou Whitney used her social standing to bring attention and funds to her favored causes, including equine hospitals and research; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, she funded the Saratoga Backstretch Appreciation program which hosted family activities and cookouts for track employees, and supported a Saratoga-based equine welfare organization, the town's YMCA, several local parks and the hospital; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, Marylou Whitney became the first woman in 80 years to own and breed a Kentucky Oaks winner; she received an Eclipse Award of Merit in 2010 for her contributions to racing, and was elected into The Jockey Club in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Marylou Whitney's participation in Saratoga's culture is the most significant of anyone in her time; for seven decades she was among the most successful owners in Thoroughbred racing; and

WHEREAS, With her passion for racing only matched by her love for the city of Saratoga Springs and the backstretch community, Marylou Whitney's generosity was unparalleled and the list of her contributions is endless; Saratoga would not be the destination it is today without her esteemed leadership, dedication and support; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her beloved husband, Marylou Whitney is

survived by her five children, Louise, Frank, Henry, Heather and Cornelia; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Marylou Whitney leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all she served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life of Marylou Whitney, renowned socialite, legendary philanthropist and devoted member of her community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Marylou Whitney.