

Legislative Resolution

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo to designate March 2011 as “Women’s History Month” in the State of New York, and commemorating the New York State Senate’s “Women of Distinction” tribute

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge and celebrate individuals and events of historic significance which add vitality, sensitivity, understanding and inspiration to the diversity and value of the people of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Women of every economic, ethnic and religious background have made significant contributions that are reflected in our cultural, social, educational, industrial and economic diversity, and have contributed in many ways, including as writers, educators, scientists, heads of state, politicians, civil rights crusaders, artists, entertainers, businesswomen, military personnel, aviators, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, health professionals, engineers, religious leaders, judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, athletes, mothers, nurturers and the building blocks of our communities; and

WHEREAS, It is the purpose of this legislative body to induct three new honorees for the year 2011: America’s first trained nurse Linda Richards of Potsdam, (1841-1930), women’s advocate Mary Wiltsie Fuller of Troy and the Glens Falls area (1862-1943) and the first African-American female doctor in New York, and the third in the nation Susan Smith McKenney Steward (1847-1918) of Brooklyn.

WHEREAS, Women who have become part of New York’s lasting heritage by fighting against stereotypes, prejudice and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, include Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), former slave and famous activist; Harriet Tubman (1820-1913), best-known “conductor” of the Underground Railroad and promoter of black education and women’s rights; suffragettes Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902); world renowned folk artist Grandma Moses (1860-1961); famed reporter Nellie Bly (1867-1922); Sybil Ludington (1761-1839), known as the “female Paul Revere”; Barbara McClintock (1901-1992), Nobel Prize-winning genetic scientist; and “First Lady of the World,” Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962); and

WHEREAS, New York State has been, and continues to be, the home to many distinguished women who have made their mark in history as the first in their field to succeed; representative of these “first” are contributions by women such as: Lady Deborah Moody (1586-1659), first woman grantee for land ownership in the New World; Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), first female physician; Emma Willard (1787-1870), founder of the first endowed institution of education for women; hairdressing entrepreneur Madam C.J. Walker (1867-1919), Harlem leader and first self-made female millionaire in the U.S.; Buffalonian Louise Blanchard Bethune (1856-1913), first professional female architect in the Nation; Lucille Ball (1911-1989), actor and president of Desilu Productions, the first woman to lead a major Hollywood production company; Katharine Bement Davis (1860-1935), New York City Correction Commissioner, first woman to head a major City agency; Winifred Edgerton Merrill (1862-1951), the first American woman to receive a Ph.D. in Mathematics; Dr. Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1919), the first and only woman to be presented with the Congressional Medal of Honor; and Belva Lockwood (1830-1917), the first woman to practice law before the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, September 11, 2011 will mark the 10-year anniversary of the unprecedented tragedy that befell our State and Nation on September 11, 2001; this year we again remember “Women of Distinction” honorees Moira Smith, a decorated NYPD Officer; Captain Kathy Mazza, the first female commandant of the Port Authority Police Training Academy; and Yamel Merino, New York State’s 2001 Emergency Medical Technician of the Year, all of whom were among the first responders on the scene at the World Trade Center, literally saving the lives of hundreds; and

WHEREAS, The horrific events of September 11th shone a bright light on the heroic actions of emergency service workers; working side by side, running stride for stride, women and men worked together tirelessly to rescue and recover victims; Women of Distinction commemorates the role that women have always played in serving our communities as emergency and rescue workers, and pay special tribute to the women heroes on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body recognizes that New York State is the home to countless women who are strong and colorful threads, vital to the fabric of our rich heritage, who have contributed, and continue to add to the advancement of our culture through their traditional and non-traditional roles in society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to officially designate March 2011 as “Women’s History Month” in the State of New York, and to commemorate the New York State Senate’s “Women of Distinction,” a time to recognize the unique and enduring contributions of women throughout New York State and the Nation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, Lieutenant Governor Robert Duffy, the National Women’s Hall of Fame, and the New York State Division for Women