

2023-J1512

Senate Resolution No. 1512

BY: Senator GRIFFO

COMMENDING Robert Everett, Norman Hill, Shirley Waters, and Colonel Marinus Willett posthumously upon the occasion of their induction into the 2023 Oneida County History Center's Dr. David and Carolyn Ellis Historical Hall of Fame

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that the quality and character of life in this great Empire State is indelibly enriched by the faithful and untiring efforts of those individuals who have helped shape the history of their area; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Robert Everett, Norman Hill, Shirley Waters, and Colonel Marinus Willett posthumously upon the occasion of their induction into the 2023 Oneida County History Center's Dr. David and Carolyn Ellis Historical Hall of Fame, to be honored at the annual Historical Hall of Fame and Living Legends Awards Celebration at the Irish Cultural Center in Utica, New York on Thursday, October 19, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1946, the Historical Hall of Fame honors individuals from Oneida County whom have made an impact on the community and the world; it's goal is to ensure that noteworthy people in the Oneida community and their achievements are recorded in local history; and

WHEREAS, Emigrating from Wales in 1823 and starting his career in Utica, New York, Robert Everett was a congregational minister, printer, and noted abolitionist; and

WHEREAS, Preaching against the principles of slavery ahead of his contemporaries, Robert Everett started a monthly newsletter titled, Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd, which was distributed to Welsh-American settlements across the United States from the years 1840 to 1875; and

WHEREAS, With the vision of a united Welsh community that could influence and support the movement to abolish slavery, Robert Everett's mission was to persuade new immigrants to become citizens and voters; and

WHEREAS, Devoting his life to his mission, Robert Everett was an active station master in the Underground Railroad and encouraged the Welsh to support the Civil War; referred to as "our Welsh friend" by Frederick Douglass, he received permission to translate the works of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe into Welsh; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, Robert Everett was inducted into the National Abolition Hall of Fame in Peterboro, New York, in recognition of his lifelong leadership in the anti-slavery movement; and

WHEREAS, Moving to Utica, New York in the 1940s, Norman Hill was born and raised in segregated Eufaula, Alabama; he was the first

African-American real estate broker in the City of Utica and a community leader; and

WHEREAS, After serving the Nation in the United States Air Force, Norman Hill aspired to purchase a home and worked two jobs to make his

goal a reality; he secured employment as a police officer at Griffiss Air Force Base, which made it financially possible for him to purchase his first home; and

WHEREAS, After finding a new found passion for home-ownership and its ability to foster the economic growth of a community at large, Norman Hill pursued a career as a real estate broker; and

WHEREAS, An avid supporter of education, Norman Hill co-founded the ALAGA Civic Club, which sought to encourage children in the Cornhill Community to stay in school, maintain excellent scholastic standards, and attend college; also serving on a myriad of community boards, he was involved with the Cosmopolitan Community Center, Mid-Utica Neighborhood Preservation Center, Leisure Time Center, and NAACP; and

WHEREAS, A pioneering newspaperwoman, painter, and community advocate, Shirley Waters attended Rome Free Academy and graduated from Syracuse University with a BFA in Painting in 1943; and

WHEREAS, Learning the newspaper business at a young age from her family, Shirley Waters served as Vice President and Secretary at the Rome Sentinel; and

WHEREAS, Widely admired throughout the newspaper industry, Shirley Waters was an advocate for and a philanthropist of the arts; she was instrumental in raising funds to restore the Stanley Theater and worked to develop the Griffiss International Outdoor Sculpture Park; and

WHEREAS, Receiving many awards for her community service, Shirley Waters was honored with the Woman of Merit Award for Art, the SUNY College of Technology Distinguished Service Award, YMCA Salute to Women Award for Art, The Rome Area Chamber of Commerce, Cultural Vitality

Award, Rotary Club's Roses for the Living Award, Rome/Utica/Herkimer Chamber of Commerce Athena Award, and the YWCA of Utica selected her for the Salute to Women Award for distinguished service; and

WHEREAS, Born on Long Island in 1740, Colonel Marinus Willett was a Revolutionary War hero whose actions helped the Continental Army claim victory; and

WHEREAS, Having served in the French and Indian War and as an active member of the Sons of Liberty, Colonel Marinus Willett was second in command to Colonel Peter Gansevoort at Fort Schuyler and led a successful attack against the Native American and loyalist camps during the British siege of Fort Schuyler in 1777; and

WHEREAS, Defending the Fort until 1778, Colonel Marinus Willett left to join the main army under General Washington; he commanded all the American troops in the Mohawk Valley from the years 1781 to 1783, deterring countless raids by loyalists and leading several counter-attacks, one of which resulted in the death of Walter Butler, a notorious loyalist leader; and

WHEREAS, After the war, Colonel Marinus Willett returned to New York City, but remained in public service as a two-term sheriff and one-term mayor; and

WHEREAS, Passing away at 90 years old, The National Park Service visitor center in Rome, New York is named in the Colonel's honor; and

WHEREAS, With a tireless and unwavering commitment to their community, Robert Everett, Norman Hill, Shirley Waters, and Colonel Marinus Willett devoted their entire life to making the Greater Oneida area a better place for its citizens to live, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, These extraordinary individuals lived immensely beautiful lives built on compassion, kindness, and respect for others; they will be remembered as some of the most significant and enduring civic and political leaders in the history of Oneida County, and their insight and strength will forever serve as a beacon of love and hope to the countless lives they have touched; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Robert Everett, Norman Hill, Shirley Waters, and Colonel Marinus Willett posthumously upon the occasion of their induction into the 2023 Oneida County History Center's Dr. David and Carolyn Ellis Historical Hall of Fame; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the families of Robert Everett, Norman Hill, Shirley Waters, and Colonel Marinus Willett.