

2011-K1306

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern and his wife, Mrs. Sheila Halpern after 60 years of dedicated leadership to the Flatbush Park Jewish Center

WHEREAS, The character and richness of religious and community life in this noble Empire State is nourished and fulfilled through the faithful concern and selfless devotion of those who would commit their energies and purpose to the ministry of others; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to bring full recognition and just tribute to those individuals who distinguish themselves and the ministry through their unremitting commitment and preeminence of service; and

WHEREAS, The Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern and his wife, Mrs. Sheila Halpern after 60 years of dedicated leadership to the Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Brooklyn, New York, to be recognized at its 60th Anniversary celebration on Sunday, May 20, 2012; and

WHEREAS, The Flatbush Park Jewish Center was founded in 1952, by Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern and a few congregants; and

WHEREAS, During his tenure, he has guided and overseen the development from humble beginnings in storefronts on Mill Avenue and later on Avenue N, to its present prominence as one of the leading Orthodox synagogues in New York in the permanent synagogue/Jewish Center complex on Avenue U; and

WHEREAS, Congregants met in a store on Avenue N, paying the owner \$5 per service; a daily minyan was difficult to come by, but families were steadily trickling into the area from such fading Jewish neighborhoods as Brownsville and East New York; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern graduated from Yeshiva College in

1949 and was ordained by Rabbi Samuel Belkin, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchick and Rabbi Moshe Shatzkes of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Rabbinical Seminary of Yeshiva University in 1952; and

WHEREAS, Later that year, he was called to the pulpit which he still occupies in the Flatbush Park Jewish Center; in 1982, he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity Degree, Honoris Causa, recognizing his successful building, spiritually and physically, of both the Center and the community; and

WHEREAS, In 1952, Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern, single and newly ordained by the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University, took what he thought was a temporary pulpit in a pioneer Brooklyn Jewish community later to be named Mill Basin; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern married the former Sheila Lifshutz, and together they raised three wonderful children, Neil, Risa and Beth; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his service to the Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern served as a Chaplain in the 71st Infantry of the 42nd Division of the National Guard for 10 years, and sits on the New York Board of Rabbis; and

WHEREAS, The congregants, many of them World War II veterans from Orthodox backgrounds, were drawn to the neighborhoods by affordable homes; 50 years later, the congregation has grown into a sprawling, four-building complex on Avenue U, numerous youth programs, the affiliated Crown Heights Yeshiva, a Talmud Torah school and several separate daily and Shabbat minyonim; and

WHEREAS, Sheila Halpern has been devoted to the congregation of the Flatbush Park Jewish Center for more than 50 years, she has been there for the congregants on sad as well as joyous occasions. She has joined

with Rabbi Halpern on his visits to the ill and bereaved. Moreover Sheila Halpern has been a woman of valor and an inspiring role model for all; and

WHEREAS, With approximately 400 family members, the congregation actively supports Torah, religious and social programs in Mill Basin as well as New York City and Israel; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, the Flatbush Park Jewish Center has been a symbol of hope and prosperity in the Mill Basin Jewish community, serving a diverse group of worshippers including seniors, professionals and the recently organized young families division; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern and his wife, Sheila, have been an inspiration to so many in the immediate Jewish community and well-beyond the boundaries of the borough of Brooklyn as a teacher, builder, mentor, leader, advisor, friend, visionary, blessing, interpreter, helper and a beacon of light; and

WHEREAS, This distinguished man of God has always given enlightenment, guidance and wisdom to the many entrusted to his care and has administered abundantly and unstintingly to the spiritual and corporal needs of all; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body that when a person of such noble aims and accomplishments is brought to our attention it is appropriate to publicly and jubilantly proclaim and commend that individual for the edification of others; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern who is retiring after 60 years of dedicated leadership to the Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Brooklyn, New York, noting his unremitting and compassionate faith and his exemplary service to God, man and his community, and extending to him the heartfelt best wishes of this Legislative Body for a future of purposeful success and well-being; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Rabbi Dr. David S. Halpern and his wife, Sheila.