

2013-J3401

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 97th birthday of Ella Fitzgerald and her tremendous contributions to jazz

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those musical geniuses who brought entertainment and cultural enrichment to the citizens of the great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Also known as the "First Lady of Song", "Queen of Jazz", and "Lady Ella", Ella Fitzgerald was an American jazz vocalist noted for her purity of tone, impeccable diction, phrasing and intonation, and a "horn-like" improvisational ability, particularly her scat singing; she was a notable interpreter of the Great American Songbook; and

WHEREAS, Ella Fitzgerald was born on April 25, 1917, in Newport News, Virginia, the daughter of Temperance "Tempie" and William Fitzgerald; her parents separated soon after her birth, and Ella and her mother went to Yonkers, New York; she and her family were Methodists and were active in the Bethany African Methodist Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, In her youth, Ella Fitzgerald wanted to be a dancer, although she loved listening to jazz recordings by Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby and The Boswell Sisters, and idolized lead singer Connee Boswell; after the death of her mother in 1932 and overcoming many hardships and obstacles, a young Ella made her singing debut at age 17 on November 21, 1934, at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York and the rest was history; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of her 59-year recording career, the First Lady of Song sold 40 million copies of her 70-plus albums, won 13 Grammy Awards and was awarded the National Medal of Arts by former president Ronald Reagan and the Presidential Medal of Freedom by former president George H. W. Bush; and

WHEREAS, Other major awards and honors Ella Fitzgerald received during

her career were the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Medal of Honor Award, the National Medal of Art, the first Society of Singers Lifetime Achievement Award, named "Ella" in her honor, and the George and Ira Gershwin Award for Lifetime Musical Achievement; and WHEREAS, Ella Fitzgerald's most famous collaborations were with the vocal quartet Bill Kenny & The Ink Spots, trumpeter Louis Armstrong, the guitarist Joe Pass, and the bandleaders Count Basie and Duke Ellington; and

WHEREAS, On January 10, 2007, the United States Postal Service announced that Ella Fitzgerald would be honored with her own 39-cent postage stamp; it was released in April of 2007 as part of the Postal Service's Black Heritage series; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper to meritoriously acknowledge Ella Fitzgerald during this month of April which is Jazz Appreciation Month; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 97th birthday of Ella Fitzgerald and her tremendous contributions to jazz; and be it further

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