

2013-K832

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa, civil rights leader, teacher, freedom fighter, Father of his Nation, and inspiration to the global community

WHEREAS, It is with profound intent that this Legislative Body is moved to pay homage to a man of indomitable faith and dedication whose purposeful life and accomplishments will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to give acclaim to individuals of great character whose lives exemplify the highest ideals of humanity; and

WHEREAS, Born into a royal clan on July 18, 1918, in Mvezo, South Africa, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela died on December 5, 2013, at the age of 95; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela attended local boarding schools and then Fort Hare University; while studying law, he developed an interest in African nationalism and non-violent resistance; and

WHEREAS, Later, while working as a law clerk, Nelson Mandela became active in the African National Congress (ANC), eventually serving as its vice president as the South African government continued to enforce apartheid; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela was charged with conspiring against the government and sentenced to life in prison in 1964; he, along with seven other ANC members, were sent to Robben Island Prison; and

WHEREAS, He delivered his famous "I am prepared to die" statement from the dock at the opening of the Rivonia Trial, which declared "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an

ideal for which I am prepared to die."; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela completed his law degree by correspondence at Robben Island; throughout his time in prison, local and international pressure built for the South African government to release him; and

WHEREAS, In the late 1980s, the campaign to release Nelson Mandela reached its apex, with demonstrators across the world's major cities gathering and chanting the slogan: "Free Nelson Mandela!"; and

WHEREAS, In February of 1990, the hopes and dreams of Nelson Mandela's supporters were answered when President Frederik De Klerk announced his release; and

WHEREAS, Soon after he was freed, this magnanimous leader set about creating the world he envisioned; Nelson Mandela began negotiations with the South African government, leading to the gradual dismantling of apartheid from 1990 to 1993, which earned both him and De Klerk a joint Nobel Peace Prize in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela visited the Empire State in the Spring of 1990, just four months following his release from prison; during his three-day stay, more than one million happy New Yorkers, including then Governor Mario Cuomo and then Mayor David Dinkins, turned out for a series of events, including an exciting ticker-tape parade down the Canyon of Heroes, and inspiring Harlem street rally, a moving speech at a Brooklyn high school and an uplifting concert at Yankee Stadium; and

WHEREAS, Admired by his country and the world at large, Nelson Mandela won South Africa's first multi-racial elections on April 27, 1994, becoming its first black president; he vowed to build a "rainbow nation at peace with itself and with the world"; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the intention of resolving the gaping wounds left by apartheid, and working toward national unity; and

WHEREAS, At the end of his term in 1999, Nelson Mandela withdrew from political life but remained active in various causes, particularly in

the fight against AIDS, the disease that claimed the life of his son, Makgatho, in 2005; and

WHEREAS, South African cleric Desmond Tutu, the first black archbishop of Cape Town and a vocal opponent of racial segregation, described this extraordinary man "a global icon of reconciliation"; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela is survived by his wife, Graca Machel and three children, as well as his former wife, Winnie Madikizela; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Mandela's monumental legacy will continue to shine forth as a beacon of hope for all those who aspire to create a just and peaceful world; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa, remembering his purposeful life and countless achievements, and expressing its sincerest condolences to his family and nation; and be it further

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