

## 2013-K1084

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons upon the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood

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, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons upon the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood, to be celebrated in June 2014; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons serves as Senior Minister of St. Albans Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, St. Albans, New York; and

WHEREAS, Born in High Point, North Carolina, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology in 1970 from North Carolina Central University, and a Master of Divinity degree in 1973 from the Howard University School of Divinity; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons began his service as an ordained minister as Associate Minister with the Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ in Washington, DC, from 1973 to 1977; and

WHEREAS, In August 1977, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons was called to serve as Senior Minister of the Mayflower Congregational Church in Detroit, Michigan; after six years of leading this congregation's renewal as a vital urban church, he was elected in 1983 as Secretary for

Racial, Ethnic and Minority Church Development for the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries in New York City, where this dedicated man assumed primary staff leadership for growth and development in African American, Latino, American Indian, and Pacific Islander-Asian American churches; and

WHEREAS, Since March 1991, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons has served as Senior Minister of the St. Albans Congregational Church; under his visionary leadership, the congregation has grown rapidly with active members who share mutual labors sponsoring just over 50 ministries for congregants and the community; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons has been called upon to contribute his time and talents to countless civic and charitable endeavors and has always given of himself unstintingly; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons has served as chair of the Board of Directors of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, chair of the Board of Directors of the United Church of Christ of Justice and Witness Ministries, chair of the United Church of Christ Search Committee for General Minister, and President of the Southeast Queens Clergy for Community Empowerment, Inc., now known as Clergy United for Community Empowerment; and

WHEREAS, Among his numerous awards and honors, Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons has received citations for outstanding ministerial leadership from the Michigan State Legislature, the Detroit City Council, and the New York City Council, as well as honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees for contributions to racial and social justice from Ursinus College and Huston-Tillotson College; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his wife, Gayle Hudson Simmons, and their son, Aaron (Taiya), as well as two grandsons, Christon and

Tyler, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his luminous ministry, Reverend Dr. Henry T.

Simmons enjoys painting, sketching playing the trumpet/cornet, tennis, reading and collecting art, and musical instruments from the African Diaspora; and

WHEREAS, The spiritual guidance and nurturing of the citizens of the State of New York are of great importance to the vitality and well-being of our communities; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to bring full recognition and just tribute to men and women of religious commitment who accept the responsibility of moral leadership and render the wisdom of human understanding; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons upon the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Reverend Dr. Henry T. Simmons.