

## 2013-J5494

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION mourning the death of Duane Skrabalak, distinguished conductor and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to citizens of the State of New York whose lifework and civic endeavor served to enhance the quality of life in their communities and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Duane Skrabalak of Binghamton, New York died on April 21, 2014, at the age of 65; and

WHEREAS, Born February 19, 1949, Duane Skrabalak spent four decades with the Tri-Cities Opera (TCO); his earliest professional training began in 1970 under the tutelage of TCO founders Peyton Hibbitt and Carmen Savoca; and

WHEREAS, Duane Skrabalak distinguished himself in his profession and by his sincere dedication and substantial contribution to the welfare of his community; and

WHEREAS, Duane Skrabalak first joined Tri-Cities Opera as a singer and pianist, and soon after became choral director; he eventually crossed the footlights to concentrate on conducting as well as coaching voice and language; he made his conducting debut in 1974 with Gounod's "Faust"; and

WHEREAS, Since that time, Duane Skrabalak conducted more than 80 productions, as well as numerous chamber programs and special presentations; he was named Artistic Director in 1995, during which time he also joined the faculty of Binghamton University as an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Voice/Opera for the Master of Music program with specialization in Opera; and

WHEREAS, A driving force behind Tri-Cities Opera's success, Duane Skrabalak was Music Director for the world premiere of Myron Fink's

"Chinchilla", and served as host of TCO's Operalogues which broadcasted on public radio; and

WHEREAS, Duane Skrabalak's Operalogues were a signature piece of who he was and truly reflected his wit, his intelligence, his incredible knowledge and love of languages, his piano skills, his humor and his charm; and

WHEREAS, Subsequently, Tri-Cities Opera will dedicate the preview of "Die Fledermaus" on Saturday, April 26, 2014, to Duane Skrabalak in just tribute of his remarkable passion and genius for music, language and literature; and

WHEREAS, During his tenure with TCO and Binghamton University, Duane Skrabalak made numerous guest conducting appearances including the Atlanta Civic Opera, the Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh, the Clemens Center in Elmira and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra for the Israel Festival; and

WHEREAS, With an immense talent that could have taken him anywhere, Duane Skrabalak always returned to his first love, Binghamton, New York and Tri-Cities Opera; and

WHEREAS, Duane Skrabalak represented TCO in many more ways than just on the podium at The Forum; he was the founder and artistic director of Opera-Go-Round, the touring education program of one-act operas; in addition, he served as an accompanist and TCO's chief language and dictation teacher; and

WHEREAS, Duane Skrabalak retired from both the Tri-Cities Opera and Binghamton University in 2010; many of his students have gone forward to enjoy illustrious operatic careers around the world; from the NYC Metropolitan Opera to the famous stages of Europe, his students have profited greatly from his paternal approach to teaching; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, at age 50, Duane Skrabalak became the youngest person to receive a star on Binghamton's Walk of Fame; the world was truly a better place with Duane in it, and he will be deeply missed by

those fortunate enough to have known him; and

WHEREAS, Pre-deceased by his mother, Helen, and his father, Stanley, Duane Skrabalak is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Dr. Dale S. and Linda M. Skrabalak; his sister and brother-in-law, Darlene and Jon Kendrot; niece, Dr. Heather L. Gifford (Andrew); nephew, Nickolas A. Skrabalak (Lauren); niece, Ashley; and his great-nieces and great-nephews, Alayna, Jocelyn, Maxton and Hayes; he is also survived by two dear friends: his mentor, Peyton Hibbitt and Joanne Ardune; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit, imbued with a sense of compassion, and comforted by a loving family, Duane Skrabalak leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Duane Skrabalak, distinguished conductor and devoted member of his community; and be it further

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