

## 2013-K1341

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Leslie Robbins upon the occasion of her retirement after 35 years of distinguished service to the Riverside Learning Center

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body seeks to acknowledge those individuals whose professional lives and civic endeavors serve to enhance the stature of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to commend Leslie Robbins upon the occasion of her retirement after 35 years of distinguished service to The Riverside Learning Center to be celebrated with a party held in her honor on Sunday, December 21, 2014; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, The Riverside Language Program offered the first free, intensive English classes for newly-arrived refugees and immigrants in New York and began a program that has launched new lives for nearly 50,000 students and their families; and

WHEREAS, From the beginning, the mission of The Riverside Language Program has been to provide free English language classes for immigrants from around the world and to help them learn about American culture; and

WHEREAS, Within this context, Riverside trains and develops master teachers and advocates for the students and the profession to which they belong; this mission has made the Riverside Language Program unique; and

WHEREAS, Students from all over the world sit next to one another in class; they not only learn English, they also learn respect for other cultures and tolerance for different ideas; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Robbins and her business partner believe that the instructors in their program should be trained teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); all members of the instructional staff have at least a master's degree and many of the teachers have been at the school almost since its inception; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Robbins has been honored by the Literacy Assistance Center for her work, as have several members of her staff; in 2012, one Riverside teacher was named a NEW YORK TIMES Teacher of the Year runner-up; and

WHEREAS, Born and raised in New York City, Leslie Robbins is a product of the New York City public school system; and

WHEREAS, She earned both her bachelor's degree and a master's degree at NYU; in addition, she received another master's degree from Columbia University and her certification from the Business School at Columbia for Not-For-Profit Management; and

WHEREAS, Before The Riverside Language Program, Leslie Robbins was an editor with Oxford University Press and Bobbs-Merrill; her interest in language acquisition led her to work with communicating with dolphins at the Kewalo Basin Marine Mammal Laboratory in Honolulu one summer; and

WHEREAS, Leslie Robbins has made it her life's work to help newly arrived refugees and immigrants find a safe harbor where they feel welcomed, learn English and begin a new life; and

WHEREAS, Her students from more than 75 countries have joined the labor force in New York and other cities in the United States, bringing their expertise and contributing to the diversity of our nation; and

WHEREAS, These students are doctors, engineers, scientists and even ESOL teachers; the ripple effect of the extraordinary work Leslie Robbins and the Riverside Learning Center have done is felt all over our State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, For the past 35 years, Leslie Robbins rendered faithful, conscientious and valuable service to the Riverside Learning Center and those it serves; and

WHEREAS, Governed by a keen sense of duty and always showing a unique grasp of human problems, Leslie Robbins served with loyalty, honor and distinction; and

WHEREAS, During her tenure, Leslie Robbins earned the admiration,

esteem and affection of her colleagues; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the quality of life in their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their profession, certainly have earned the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Leslie Robbins upon the occasion of her retirement after 35 years of distinguished service to the Riverside Learning Center; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Leslie Robbins.