

2015-J550

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Chester Higgins, Jr. for special recognition in observance of Black History Month

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, From time to time this Legislative Body takes note of certain extraordinary individuals it wishes to recognize for their valued contributions to the success and progress of society and publicly acknowledge their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Chester Higgins, Jr. for special recognition in observance of Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, A renowned photojournalist, Chester Higgins, Jr. was born in November of 1946, and grew up in New Brockton, Alabama; in 1970, he graduated from Tuskegee Institute with a Bachelor's degree in Business Management; and

WHEREAS, After purchasing his first camera in 1968, Chester Higgins, Jr. began to document the civil rights protests by black students at Tuskegee, compiling his photographs under the title, "Student Unrest at Tuskegee Institute"; and

WHEREAS, Chester Higgins, Jr. worked as a part-time photography instructor at the New York University School of Fine Arts from 1975 to 1978, before beginning his illustrious career with THE NEW YORK TIMES in 1975; and

WHEREAS, Chester Higgins, Jr. has five books of photography to his credit: THE BLACK WOMAN (1970), DRUMS OF LIFE (1974), SOME TIME AGO: A HISTORIC PORTRAIT OF BLACK AMERICANS 1850-1950 (1980), FEELING THE SPIR-

IT: SEARCHING THE WORLD FOR THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA (1994), and ELDER GRACE: THE NOBILITY OF AGING (2000)-- all which explore and celebrate, in different ways, African American or African heritage, culture and identity; and

WHEREAS, In addition to THE NEW YORK TIMES, the extraordinary photographs of Chester Higgins, Jr. have appeared in ART NEWS, NEWSWEEK, FORTUNE, ESSENCE and ARCHAEOLOGY magazines; and

WHEREAS, For more than 25 years, Chester Higgins, Jr. traveled the world, capturing photographs of the traditions, spirituality and daily lives of people of African heritage; he has assembled a gallery of the beautiful, the pensive, and the noble by seeking to apprehend his subjects' inner light and capturing qualities of humor, elegance and dignity; and

WHEREAS, During the course of his renowned career, Chester Higgins, Jr. has had one-man exhibitions at the International Center of Photography, the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum of African Art, the Museum of Photographic Arts, the National Civil Rights Museum, and the Field Museum of Natural History, among others; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, his photographs have also been shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and in American embassy galleries around the world; they are included in the permanent collections of the New York Museum of Modern Art, the International Center of Photography, and the Schomburg Center; and

WHEREAS, Chester Higgins, Jr. has been the recipient of countless awards and accolades, some of which include, a United Nations Award, an American Graphic Design Award, a Graphics Magazine Award, and an Art Directors Club of New York Award; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his wife, Betsy, and his two children, Chester III and Nataki, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individ-

ual for the benefit of others which Chester Higgins, Jr. has displayed throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the well-being and vitality of their community and have shown a long and sustained commitment to excellence 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 honor Chester Higgins, Jr. for special recognition in observance of Black History Month; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Chester Higgins, Jr.