

2015-K637

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Sistas' Place in recognition of and for the preservation of this cultural institution in the heart of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to commend those institutions of historical significance which add strength, vigor and inspiration to the cultural diversity and quality of life in the communities of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Sistas' Place in recognition of and for the preservation of this cultural institution in the heart of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place, where culture is a weapon, opened September 23, 1995, with a tribute to John Coltrane featuring singer Leon Thomas and saxophonist Carlos Garnett and the music has continued from September to May; and

WHEREAS, In the face of gentrification and loss of Black cultural institutions, Sistas' Place remains a beacon of light for Jazz greats and upcoming artists bringing their music back home to where it was birthed; and

WHEREAS, Under the leadership of Tori McCarthey, Deacon Leroy Applin, Sam Pinn and Viola Plummer, Sistas' Place was a founding member of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival in 1997, the longest running community based jazz festival; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place has featured renowned artists including the late drummer Rashied Ali, saxophonist Sonny Fortune, saxophonist Roland Alexander, saxophonist Gary Bartz; because of the atmosphere of serious appreciation, Sistas' Place is where Reggie Workman, Jimmy Owens, Jimmy Spaulding and Cecil Bridgewater have chosen to celebrate milestone

birthdays in performance; and

WHEREAS, It is where Brooklyn based talent such as Tulivu Donna Cumberbatch, and Ed Stoute keep the spirit of the East alive and where Eric Gale, Fostina Dixon and Doug Cern chose to play after being away from Brooklyn for many years; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place is where Jimmy Spaulding brought a not yet famous Grammy winner Gregory Porter, and where Cecil Bridgewater debuted the Charane Wade, who is now performing in jazz clubs throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, It is where Rene McClean leads groups featuring the about to be discovered new talent such as Dezron Douglas and Corcoran Holt, and where Anthony Wonsey, Kenyatta Beasley and Keith Loftis show that jazz is a music with a bright future; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place has been supported in its work by musicians such as trumpeter Charles Tolliver who did a benefit concert performing John Coltrane's Africa Brass; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place's spirit inspired the late Jim Phillips to write a song and is the only jazz club with its own theme song; sung by Lil Phillips, "You Gotta Come to Sistas' Place" is played before each set; and

WHEREAS, Ahmed Abdullah, the musical director for the last 16 years, introduced the Satellites of the Sun festival honoring Sun Ra, featuring many members of the Arkestra including trumpeter and painter Dick Griffith; Vince Chancey, bassist John Orr, violinist Billy Bang and Abdullah's own band DIASPORA--Dispersions of the Spirit of Ra, with pianist D.D. Jackson, bassist Radu, trumpeters Salim Washington and Alex Harding, Monique Ngozi Nri and the late poet Louis Reyes Rivera and violinist Billy Bang; and

WHEREAS, Poetry has also found a home at Sistas' Place, under the leadership of the late Louis Reyes Rivera, where twice a month writing workshops inspired and trained writers and generated numerous books, and

special performances featuring Louis Reyes Rivera & the Jazzoets, Sekou Sundiata, George Edward Tait, Tom Mitchelson, and Duma Ndlovu of South Africa, the poet/playwright known throughout Brooklyn while in exile from apartheid, who was enthusiastically received at a homecoming reception; and

WHEREAS, A blending of poetry, jazz, hip hop and live art work has started with the performances called Messiah & Friends; the first one was held in November 2014, bringing a new audience to Sistas' Place; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place hosted the premier of a play, which dealt with drug addiction, by Marvin X about Huey P. Newtown and for a month the performances were sold out; and

WHEREAS, Amiri Baraka, who wrote a review of the show, also performed there numerous times with Amina Baraka and Blue Ark; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place has also been involved in the health of the community, hosting an Asthma project, the Code Quarter water project, which resulted in the banning of asthma inducing preservative from Quarter Water drinks; in addition, vacant lots which were contributing to the high rate of asthma of children on the block were cleaned up; and

WHEREAS, With the launching of the Affordable Care Act, a series of informational meetings were held to let people know about the program and how to enroll; and

WHEREAS, Lively discussions have occurred during book signings by Walter Beach, Jr. on racism in sports, with Gerald Horne on "The Counter Revolution of 1776," and Randy Weston, on the historical significance of Bed-Stuy; and

WHEREAS, History is part of culture and Sistas' Place had the honor of hosting Dr. Olivia Hooker, a survivor of the Tulsa Massacre, and presented the film "Before They Die"; Dr. Hooker was honored at City Hall as part of Women's History Month; and

WHEREAS, Other prominent visitors who have shared historic contributions have been Bobby Seale, John Carlos, Camille Yarbrough and Pam Africa; and

WHEREAS, Sistas' Place has brought to Bed-Stuy international dignitaries including the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Foreign Minister of Namibia, H.E. Thandiwe, Father Miguel D'Escoto, former Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, Ambassadors to the United Nations from the Republic of Zimbabwe, Cuba, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and from the African Union; and

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WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when institutions of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Sistas' Place in recognition of and for the preservation of this cultural institution in the heart of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sistas' Place.