

2015-J4232

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending the Center for Black Literature upon the occasion of hosting its 13th National Black Writers Conference from March 31-April 3, 2016, and paying tribute to this year's honorees

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body, in keeping with its time-honored traditions, to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations which foster ethnic pride and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Center for Black Literature upon the occasion of hosting its 13th National Black Writers Conference from March 31-April 3, 2016, and to pay tribute to this year's honorees; and

WHEREAS, The 2016 National Black Writers Conference award honorees represent the vast richness of Black literature and culture and include: Rita Dove, recipient of the John Oliver Killens Lifetime Achievement Award; Edwidge Danticat, recipient of the Toni Morrison Award; Michael Eric Dyson, recipient of the Richard Wright Award; Charles Johnson, recipient of the W. E. B. Du Bois Award; and Woodie King Jr., recipient of the Ida B. Wells Institutional Leadership Award; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1986, the National Black Writers Conference was established at Medgar Evers College through the visionary leadership of the late John O. Killens; it was first convened to bring together writers, critics, booksellers, book reviewers, publishers, and the general public in order to establish a dialogue on the social responsibility of the Black writer; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, this esteemed literary event has included discussions on various aspects of Black literature, the significance of

literary works produced by people of the African diaspora, and the impact that this literature has had and continues to have not only on African-American culture but on American culture in general; and WHEREAS, In 2003, the Center for Black Literature was founded to expand, broaden, and enrich the public's knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of the value of Black literature; it has since supported numerous literary programs and events which serve as a forum for the research and study of Black literature; and

WHEREAS, Through the National Black Writers Conferences and other programs sponsored by the Center for Black Literature, students, scholars, established as well as aspiring writers and poets, and the general public have all become more aware of and appreciative of the importance of Black literature and the writers who have made tremendous contributions to the African-American and Western literary canons; and

WHEREAS, The theme of the 2016 NBWC, "Writing Race: Embracing Difference," seeks to place the issues of race and difference at the forefront of literature produced by Black writers, and will feature dynamic panel discussions, roundtables, readings, films, workshops and performances; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of four days, numerous writers, scholars, literary professionals, students and the general public will gather to examine Black literary texts to both discuss the state of Black literature, and raise questions related to how and whether African-American writers "write race," and the ways in which these authors embrace differences in aesthetics, beliefs, politics, and religions; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when literary and cultural organizations 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 commemorate the 13th National Black Writers Conference on March 31-April

3, 2016, and to pay tribute to this year's honorees; and be it further
RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dr. Brenda M. Greene, Executive Director of the Center for Black Literature and Director of the National Black Writers Conferences at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, and the aforementioned honorees.