

2015-J4424

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring the life and legacy of Louise Blanchard Bethune, native New Yorker and the first American woman recognized as a professional architect

WHEREAS, New York State has long been the birthplace and home to great historical figures, men and women who, through their great personal and professional achievements, have furthered the causes of humanity, government, education, medicine, social reform and science; 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

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is pleased to honor the life and legacy of Louise Blanchard Bethune, native New Yorker and the first American woman recognized as a professional architect; and

WHEREAS, Jennie Louise Blanchard Bethune was born on July 21, 1856, in Waterloo, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Blanchard family moved to Buffalo where Louise would go on to graduate from Buffalo Central High School in 1874; and

WHEREAS, At the age of 20, Louise was offered a draftsman position in the prestigious architecture firm of Richard A. Waite; she spent five years learning about architecture at the firm; and

WHEREAS, Louise founded an independent firm in 1881 with her future husband, Robert Bethune; and

WHEREAS, In 1885, Louise was elected as a member of the Western Association of Architects (WAA), making her the first woman to be recognized as a professional architect; she served a term as vice president of WAA; and

WHEREAS, In 1888, The American Institute of Architects (AIA) named

Louise its first female associate and elevated her to fellowship the following year; and

WHEREAS, Louise was a trailblazer and steadfast advocate for women's economic equality; and

WHEREAS, She refused to participate in the design competition for Women's Building for the Chicago's World Columbian Exposition, when she discovered that women were being paid 1/10 of what men were being paid for their designs; and

WHEREAS, Louise was well-known for designing schools and other public buildings; and

WHEREAS, Her firm designed the Denton, Cottier & Daniels music store, one of the first buildings to utilize a steel frame and poured concrete slabs; and

WHEREAS, The neoclassical Hotel Lafayette, completed in 1904, was her preeminent project and cornerstone to her legacy; and

WHEREAS, December 19, 2013, marked the 100th Anniversary of Louise's death; and

WHEREAS, Louise Bethune deserves recognition among the architectural giants of the late 19th and early 20th Century; and

WHEREAS, The University of Buffalo's School of Architecture repurposed the Buffalo Meter Company Building, naming it Bethune Hall in her honor; and

WHEREAS, In commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of Bethune's passing, the American Institute of Architects New York State (AIANYS), its Buffalo chapter, and the Buffalo Architecture Foundation, dedicated a memorial grave marker at her gravesite in Forest Lawn Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Her name and legacy lives among the buildings she designed and the history she made; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is pleased to have this opportunity to express its highest admiration for Louise Blanchard Bethune and for all of the individuals who have worked to bring proper attention to her

legacy, which truly merits recognition in the grand panorama of the history of our State and Nation; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the life and legacy of Louise Blanchard Bethune, native New Yorker and America's first woman architect.