

2015-K1357

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Ruth Pelham upon the occasion of her retirement after 39 years of distinguished service to generations of youth in Albany, New York, through her Music Mobile Van

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to take note of certain extraordinary individuals who have brought entertainment and cultural enrichment to the citizens of the great 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 honor Ruth Pelham upon the occasion of her retirement after 39 years of distinguished service to generations of youth in Albany, New York, through her Music Mobile Van; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, musician and educator Ruth Pelham proposed an idea to the City of Albany to increase the availability of summertime cultural and recreational services to low-income children and families in Albany's underserved neighborhoods; very enthusiastically, the City of Albany embraced her idea, agreed to provide financial support, and thus Music Mobile was born; and

WHEREAS, For almost four decades, Music Mobile has strived to promote cooperation, empowerment, tolerance, civic responsibility, community pride, and self-esteem by developing and presenting innovative music and creative arts programs, and creating and disseminating educational resource materials; having served diverse people of all ages but with a particular focus on the education, development, and socialization of children, Music Mobile enriched the quality of life for individuals and communities and was a catalyst for cultural understanding and social transformation; and

WHEREAS, In a colorful van decorated with children's drawings, the Music Mobile traveled to parks, playgrounds, street corners and public

housing sites to engage children in interactive programs which fostered cooperation, self-esteem, neighborhood pride, appreciation of multi-cultural diversity, and learning; activities included group singing, song-writing, instrument building from recycled materials, cooperative games, and creating and displaying children's artwork in local stores; and

WHEREAS, Within a year, still with sole support from the City of Albany, Music Mobile's programs expanded to include in-school and after-school programs for elementary grade students; increasingly successful and still growing, in 1979, Music Mobile became established as a not-for-profit educational organization and began to receive grants and contributions from area foundations, businesses and individuals; and

WHEREAS, In 1981, the Music Mobile expanded beyond the City of Albany to provide statewide fee-for-service workshops, concerts and training programs for schools, community agencies, municipal playgrounds, and state parks; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, Music Mobile developed "Songstories," an oral history and songwriting project for older adults in senior citizen centers and nursing homes; the same year, Music Mobile introduced "Warmin' Up The Winter," a concert and workshop program for adults in hospitals and homeless shelters; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, Music Mobile began its international programs by collaborating in a cultural exchange program with five cities in the former Soviet Union, and then in 1986, instituted a ten year cultural exchange program with the Havasupai Tribe located in the bottom of the Grand Canyon; in 2002, the Music Mobile was invited to bring its programs to Sri Lanka where Ruth Pelham participated in a month-long Children's Rights Project by singing in villages throughout the small, island country; and

WHEREAS, Recently, Ruth Pelham returned to Sri Lanka to represent the Friends of Sri Lanka Fund, a grassroots tsunami relief initiative that she founded and coordinated with two Sri Lankan friends; ultimately, the

Fund raised a significant amount; while in Sri Lanka, she sang, built musical instruments, and made drawings with children in schools and in a refugee camp; and

WHEREAS, Since the early days of Music Mobile, Ruth Pelham has been presenting workshops and training programs that bring her pioneering method of teaching and communicating to a broad spectrum of parents, teachers, youth workers, and human service professionals; and

WHEREAS, Now after 39 years of dedicated community service, this remarkable woman, who has brought sing-alongs, simple musical instrument construction, merriment and a message of hope to generations of youths at inner-city parks has decided to end the summer park program and dissolve the Music Mobile Corporation; and

WHEREAS, In her well-deserved retirement, Ruth Pelham plans to focus on performing as a singer-songwriter of adult ballads, organizing her vast archive of Music Mobile memorabilia, develop school curriculums based on participatory music, and possibly write her memoir; and

WHEREAS, Sincerely loved and greatly respected by all those with whom she worked, Ruth Pelham will be remembered for her honesty, integrity, keen sense of duty and ability to show a unique grasp of human problems in her official acts; and

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

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Ruth Pelham upon the occasion of her retirement after 39 years of distinguished service to generations of youth in Albany, New York, through her Music Mobile Van, and to wish her continued success in all her future endeavors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Ruth Pelham.