2017-J1755

Senate Resolution No. 1755

BY: Senator PARKER

COMMENDING the West Indian American Day Carnival
Association upon the occasion of celebrating its
50th Anniversary on April 27, 2017

WHEREAS, It is the custom 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, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the West
Indian American Day Carnival Association upon the occasion of
celebrating its 50th Anniversary at a Black Tie Gala on Thursday, April
27, 2017, at the El Caribe Country Club in Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, At this historic milestone event, the West Indian American
Day Carnival Association (WIADCA) will honor individuals who have
demonstrated excellence in service partnership, as well as the highest
standards of ethical conduct, integrity and civic/social responsibility;
and

WHEREAS, Remaining true to its mission, the West Indian American Day
Carnival Association (WIADCA) promotes, develops and celebrates the West
Indian/Caribbean culture, arts history and tradition; and

WHEREAS, The History of Carnival is as colorful as the present day festival; its roots lie in the festivities of the original civilization in Ancient Kemet (Egypt); the many tribes that gathered around the Nile Delta practiced similar ceremonies to praise their deities; these tribes were nomads and settled near and far; many Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa tribes settled in the western region of Africa, and some of them ended up in the Caribbean in the 1700s and 1800s because of slavery; and

WHEREAS, During this early period, the French, Spanish and British aristocracy held grand and lavish costume balls, feasts and small street parades; slaves were not permitted to participate; after the abolishment of slavery, thousands of freed slaves celebrated by mimicking the dress and behavior of the European people; the character of Carnival changed, becoming more colorful and spectacular with magnificent and elaborately designed costumes; and

WHEREAS, The people of the Caribbean have exported their carnival traditions to Canada, England, and several United States cities; however, the New York version of this celebration far exceeds any similar celebration in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Jessie Waddle and some of her West Indian friends started the Carnival in Harlem in the 1920s by staging costume parties in large enclosed places such as the Savoy, Renaissance and Audubon Ballrooms, due to the cold wintry weather of February; this is the usual time for the pre-Lenten celebrations held in most countries around the world; however, because of the very nature of Carnival and the need to parade in costume to music, indoor confinement did not work; and

WHEREAS, The earliest known Carnival street activity was held during the 1940s when Ms. Jessie Waddle secured the first street permit for a

parade type event on the streets of Harlem; during the 1960s, another Trinidadian, Rufus Goring, brought Carnival to Brooklyn; in 1967, Mr. Goring passed the reins over to Carlos Lezama, who later became president of WIADCA and who nurtured the organization and carnival celebrations until 2001, when, due to his ill-health, retired and his daughter, Yolanda Lezama-Clark was elected president; 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 commend the West Indian American Day Carnival Association upon the occasion of celebrating its 50th Anniversary on April 27, 2017; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the West Indian American Day Carnival Association.