

2017-J1853

Senate Resolution No. 1853

BY: Senator KENNEDY

MOURNING the death of James P. Keane,
quintessential Irish politician, former Deputy
County Executive and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to publicly mourn
the death of cherished citizens of the State of New York who
distinguished themselves in their profession and in service to their
community; and

WHEREAS, With deep regret this Legislative Body records the passing
of James P. Keane, known affectionately to many as Jim, on December 19,
2016, at the age of 70, noting the loss of a citizen whose purposeful
life and endeavors contributed so much to the quality of life in his
community; and

WHEREAS, James Keane was a lifelong native of South Buffalo, growing
up on Kingston Place, the Keane home was always filled with joy and
laughter; and

WHEREAS, James Keane was one of 16 children born to the late Richard
and Kate McKenzie Keane; after high school, he proudly served his
country as a member of the United States Air Force in Thailand during
the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, After his discharge, James Keane returned to Buffalo and married his wife, the former Margaret Whalen in 1969; together, the couple happily raised their four wonderful children, Sean, Katie, Jimmy and Meg; and

WHEREAS, James Keane worked at a bank while putting himself through Canisius College; after graduation, he joined his four brothers in the Buffalo Fire Department; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, James Keane was elected to the Buffalo Common Council representing the South District; for 10 years, he dedicated his days to making Buffalo a better place for working men and women; and

WHEREAS, After a decade of distinguished service to the City of Buffalo, James Keane ventured into county government, holding the title of Erie County Commissioner of Emergency Services; he was then promoted to the position of Deputy County Executive, where he directed Erie County operations for five years; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his tenure, James Keane diligently worked to improve and enhance the quality of life for the residents in Erie County; many of the great successes of Erie County are a reflection of his work and commitment throughout his many decades of public service; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, James Keane was asked by former United States Senator Hillary Clinton to serve as her Western New York Director; in this capacity, he advised her on both economic and regional issues; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his role as a devoted public servant, James Keane was a vital member of the American Legion Post No. 721, B.F.D. Union Local No. 282 and the Ticket Takers Union Local No. 235; and

WHEREAS, James Keane will fondly be remembered as a man of the people, always happy and always smiling; he was the go-to guy who always stepped up for the cause with boundless energy and palpable enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, James Keane could often be found singing Irish songs; deeply proud of his Irish heritage and his community, he considered anyone not born in Buffalo to be unlucky; and

WHEREAS, James Keane's life was devoted to helping people, he had a true gift for storytelling and an undeniable ability to connect with anyone, often turning the staunchest opponents into friends; and

WHEREAS, The deep roots of James Keane and his entire family make his loss a true tragedy for the entire community; his impact on Western New York is truly incalculable and his work has inspired generations of dedicated public servants in South Buffalo and across Erie county; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his parents, brother, Richard (Mary) Keane, and brother-in-law, Raymond "RJ" Whalen, James P. Keane is survived by his wife, Margaret (Whalen) Keane; four children, Sean (Lisa) Keane, Katie (Ross Wickenhiser) Keane, Jimmy (Barbara) Keane, and Meg Keane; seven treasured grandchildren, Connall, Carrie, Peter, John, Seamus, Joseph and William; seven sisters, Connie Smith, Nancy Lafferty, Mary Alice (late Joseph) O'Neil, Sally (late James) Trevean, Catherine, Margaret "Mickey" (William) Ray, Maureen (Michael) Sullivan; seven brothers, Daniel, Michael (Marie), Cornelius (Ellen), Peter, William (late Nancy), Thomas (Marion), and Joseph Keane; father-in-law, Gerald J. (late Helen) Whalen; two brothers-in-law, Gerald (Nora) Whalen, Timothy (Cindy) Whalen; three sisters-in-law, Annmarie (Kevin) Kelley, Susan (James "Red") Kelleher, Casey (Jack) Kelley, and several nieces and nephews, as well as numerous friends and neighbors from South

Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo has lost a great man who deeply loved his family, his city and its people; a devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend, respected as a pillar of the Keane family, James Keane's name is synonymous with character, dignity, intellect, depth, and humor, qualities evident to his family and to all those who were fortunate enough to have known him; he will be deeply missed and truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to pay tribute to the memory of James P. Keane, to celebrate his life, and honor his accomplishments; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of James P. Keane.