

2017-J2423

Senate Resolution No. 2423

BY: Senator YOUNG

COMMEMORATING the 80th Anniversary of the Lucille Ball Little Theatre of Jamestown

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the proud and distinguished histories of exceptional organizations that are a part of the community and comprise the noble body of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Lucille Ball Little Theatre of Jamestown; and

WHEREAS, In 1920, Madelyn Jones Osgood, along with several local residents, started a theatre group known as The Players Club, and they provided an opportunity to cast a young girl named Lucille Ball in a play called Within the Law; and

WHEREAS, In 1936, a young couple, George and Harriet Warren moved from Cleveland to Jamestown, where they spearheaded the evolution of The Players Club to a new organization called the Little Theatre of Jamestown; each year ticket sales would continue to grow making it the largest membership theatre in the United States by 1945; and

WHEREAS, Following the end of World War II, membership sales would decline and it now seemed to be the best time to build their own theatre building; an outdated Howard Johnson building and carriage house at 414 Fairmount Avenue was purchased; following repairs and improvements, the business office and rehearsal space moved to Fairmount Avenue from the Scottish Rite Temple, while plays would continue to be presented at the Scottish Rite Temple; and

WHEREAS, After the Warren's resigned in 1955 to assume positions at the Rochester Community Playhouse in Rochester, New York, there were several guest Directors who would replace them; later on, the 414 Fairmount Avenue location was sold and the Shea's Theatre on East Second Street was purchased through a fundraising campaign, with the new theatre opening on April 19, 1969; and

WHEREAS, A new era began for the theatre and in 1990, Robert Ostrom, who was President of the Board of Directors, discussed with Lucille Ball, renaming the theatre the Lucille Ball Little Theatre of Jamestown to honor the Queen of Comedy; she agreed, but unfortunately passed away before the dedication ceremony, which her daughter, Lucie Arnaz and her entire family gladly attended in Lucille Ball's honor; and

WHEREAS, Upon the celebration of this historic 80th Anniversary, the evening will honor Helen and Norm Merrill for their 50 years of outstanding dedication and commitment to the Lucille Ball Little Theatre; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to publicly recognize and honor milestones in the history of communities large and small in this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to

commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Lucille Ball Little Theatre of Jamestown; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Lucille Ball Little Theatre.