

2017-K539

Assembly Resolution No. 539

BY: M. of A. Curran

MOURNING the death of Steven McDonald, heroic police officer who championed forgiveness

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to acknowledge the accomplishments of individuals of remarkable integrity and character whose life inspired and enriched the lives of their family and friends; and

WHEREAS, Steven McDonald lived his life with great dignity and genuine grace, always demonstrating a deep and continuing concern for the welfare of others in the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Steven McDonald of Malverne, New York, died on Tuesday, January 10, 2017, at the age of 59; and

WHEREAS, Within every community of the State of New York there are certain individuals who, by virtue of their commitment and dedication, command the respect and admiration of their community for their exemplary contributions and service on behalf of others; and

WHEREAS, A native of Queens Village, New York, Steven McDonald was born on March 1, 1957, to David and Anita McDonald; he and his seven siblings grew up in Rockville Centre on Long Island; and

WHEREAS, Steven McDonald proudly served his country as a Medical Corpsman in the United States Navy; after his discharge, he followed in both his father and grandfather's footsteps and joined the New York City Police Department; and

WHEREAS, On July 12, 1986, Officer Steven McDonald and his partner were on patrol when they stopped three young boys at the northern end of Central Park; seconds after he began speaking, one of them, only 15 years-old, shot him three times, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down; and

WHEREAS, Officer Steven McDonald, with a simple three word statement in the aftermath of this tragedy, became a symbol of his Christian faith by stating "I forgive him"; and

WHEREAS, Today, Steven McDonald's son, Conor, who was born six months after the shooting, is a sergeant with the New York Police Department and represents the fourth generation of the family to serve in the department; and

WHEREAS, The tragic shooting gained a great deal of publicity due to the extent of Officer Steven McDonald's injuries, the young age of the gunman, and the heartlessness of the act; and

WHEREAS, Even though he was paralyzed, Steven McDonald chose to continue to make a difference in people's lives; many times, he appeared at roll calls and offered support and empathy for his fellow wounded officers; and

WHEREAS, In the summer of 1988, Steven McDonald sent stamps and a box of stationery to the shooter in prison along with a note saying, "Let's carry on a dialogue"; he later met with the boy's mother, and

also attended services at a Baptist church in Harlem with the boy's grandmother; and

WHEREAS, Steven McDonald, who was able to speak, albeit haltingly, and breathe with the help of a respirator, made many public appearances over the years, telling of his faith as a Roman Catholic and believing if people wanted forgiveness, they had to show it to others; and

WHEREAS, Never letting his paralysis stop him from living a happy and fulfilled life, Steven McDonald appeared at numerous events to speak of the joys in his life, and support others who have courageously overcome their disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Steven McDonald told of his struggle to cope in a book titled *The Steven McDonald Story*, written by his wife and writer E. J. Kahn III; citing the support he received from fellow police officers, as well as the religious and business communities, Steven wrote "there is more love in this city than there are street corners"; and

WHEREAS, Steven McDonald's compassion and courage also touched the New York sports scene; Mets relief pitcher Jesse Orosco gave him the glove he was wearing when he got the final out in the team's 1986 World Series victory over the Boston Red Sox, and he appeared on the ice at Madison Square Garden annually to present the Rangers' Steven McDonald Extra Effort Award to a player who had demonstrated special grit; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his meritorious life, Steven McDonald touched the lives of numerous people, not only in New York, but around the world; he chose to forgive his assailant, hoped for the youth's redemption and remained in the public eye for his spirit in the face of adversity; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his mother Anita McDonald, Steven McDonald is survived by his proud father, David McDonald; his loving wife, Patricia Ann Norris-McDonald; and his cherished son, Conor McDonald; and

WHEREAS, The funeral for Steven McDonald was held on Friday, January 13, 2017, at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City; thousands of mourners were in attendance to pay tribute to this hero, including Mayor DiBlasio, NYPD Commissioner Bratton, the NYPD Emerald Society, and other top police officials; 5th Avenue was closed to allow mourners to gather and to hold a procession; and

WHEREAS, A devoted father and husband, respected as a pillar of the community, Steven McDonald'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 mourn the death of Steven McDonald, heroic police officer who championed forgiveness; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Steven McDonald.