

## 2017-J3093

Senate Resolution No. 3093

BY: Senator BRESLIN

HONORING Jonathan E. Gradess, Esq. upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the John R. Dunne Champion of Justice Award by the Prisoners' Legal Services of New York

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those within our midst who have made significant contributions to the quality of life therein; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan E. Gradess has given not only of his time and energies but also of his competence, intelligence and leadership and consequently has been designated for special recognition; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Jonathan E. Gradess, Esq. upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the John R. Dunne Champion of Justice Award by the Prisoners' Legal Services of New York to be celebrated on Wednesday, October 4, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Prisoners' Legal Services of New York (PLS) was founded in 1976 under the sponsorship of the New York State Bar Association in response to the devastating 1971 Attica riot; and

WHEREAS, The PLS founders sought to address one of the major reasons for the riot - the lack of prisoners' access to the courts and the

almost complete absence of attorneys to present their complaints in a legal forum; and

WHEREAS, PLS provides critical civil legal services to over 51,000 inmates confined in 54 New York State prisons; furthermore, PLS provides prisoners with non-violent ways to resolve disputes thereby reducing tensions and hostility and helping create a safer environment for prisoners and correctional staff alike; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan E. Gradess is receiving the auspicious John R. Dunne Champion of Justice Award in recognition of his significant contributions in the advancement of civil and human rights and unwavering commitment to ensuring that the rights of all individuals, including those incarcerated in New York's state prisons, are protected and enforced; and

WHEREAS, From 1978 until June 30, 2017, Jonathan E. Gradess served as the Executive Director of the New York State Defenders Association; he has worked as a criminal defense lawyer, a private investigator, and a law school professor; and

WHEREAS, He serves on the Restorative Justice Commission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany and the Board of Directors of Equal Justice USA; in addition, he was the Executive Director of the New York State Defenders Justice Fund and managed its Campaign for an Independent Public Defense Commission; and

WHEREAS, Jonathan E. Gradess' career began as a paralegal, thereafter graduating cum laude in 1973 from Hofstra Law School's charter class; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the entire period of his community service, a

period of constructive involvement, Jonathan E. Gradess has stood constant in dignity, good grace and humor; and

WHEREAS, Rare indeed is the impressive dedication shown by an individual for the benefit of others which Jonathan E. Gradess has displayed throughout his life; 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 this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Jonathan E. Gradess, Esq. upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the John R. Dunne Champion of Justice Award by the Prisoners' Legal Services of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Jonathan E. Gradess, Esq.