

## 2017-K979

Assembly Resolution No. 979

BY: M. of A. Magee

HONORING Forest Ranger Robert Piersma upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Raymond Murray Award by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Forest Protection

WHEREAS, The quality and sanctity of community life are cherished values worthy of safeguarding, and this Legislative Body is moved to honor those exemplary public servants who devote their lives to preserving and protecting such values; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Forest Ranger Robert Piersma upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Raymond Murray Award by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Forest Protection, to be celebrated at its Forest Ranger Awards Ceremony on Thursday, March 29, 2018, at the Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York; and

WHEREAS, The highest fulfillment of the position of New York State Forest Ranger, the Raymond Murray Award is presented to sworn members who, by a conspicuous act of valor, courage, integrity, resourcefulness and bravery in the protection of our natural resources and/or the safety of public, clearly set them apart from other persons; and

WHEREAS, On the afternoon of April 10, 2017, Ranger Robert Piersma was notified by a fellow Ranger of several people who capsized their canoe in Chittning Pond on Tassel Hill in Woodford Memorial State Forest; and

WHEREAS, Ranger Robert Piersma arrived on the scene to find two individuals still submerged in Chittning Pond, which had just recently opened up from the winter ice, making water temperatures barely above freezing; and

WHEREAS, Without hesitation or regard for his own safety, Ranger Robert Piersma grabbed his throw-bag and waded out into the lake until the water was nearly chest deep; however, he still could not reach the victims; and

WHEREAS, Ranger Robert Piersma then exited the water and ran back to his patrol vehicle; he quickly donned his cold-water rescue suit, returned to the lake and swam out to the unresponsive subjects who had their arms tightly interlocked; and

WHEREAS, A true hero, Ranger Robert Piersma grabbed one of the victims' life jackets and swam, pulling both subjects together at once against a stiff headwind; arriving volunteer firefighter rescue personnel assisted this brave Ranger in getting the subjects to shore and ultimately saving their lives; and

WHEREAS, So aptly demonstrating his character and compassion for the welfare of others, Ranger Robert Piersma truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that we should

give special recognition to those who work so assiduously for the betterment of their communities, and acknowledge publicly the heroic actions performed by the Forest Rangers of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Forest Ranger Robert Piersma upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of the Raymond Murray Award by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Forest Protection; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Forest Ranger Robert Piersma.