

2017-J5095

Senate Resolution No. 5095

BY: Senator KENNEDY

HONORING Frank B. Mesiah posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate

WHEREAS, Members of the Armed Services from the State of New York, who have served so valiantly and honorably in wars in which this country's freedom was at stake, as well as in the preservation of peace in peacetime, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Frank B. Mesiah posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Senate Liberty Medal was established by Resolution and is awarded to individuals who have merited special commendation for exceptional, heroic, or humanitarian acts on behalf of their fellow New Yorkers; and

WHEREAS, Born on July 18, 1928, Frank B. Mesiah grew up on the West Side of Buffalo and attended School 77; he went on to graduate from Grover Cleveland High School in 1946, where he was a star football player; and

WHEREAS, Frank B. Mesiah was a laborer at Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna, as well as a janitor and machine operator in the Chevrolet engine plant in Tonawanda; and

WHEREAS, On November 21, 1950, Frank B. Mesiah joined the United States Army and was stationed at the Fort Hood Army Base in Texas where he taught chemical warfare and ballistics; he attained the rank of Sergeant First Class before being honorably discharged on August 29, 1953; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service, Frank B. Mesiah served as a Buffalo Police Patrolman from 1954 to 1967; he was only the 13th African-American to serve with the Buffalo Police Department; and

WHEREAS, During his tenure, while working undercover on a police assignment, Frank B. Mesiah attended a talk by Malcolm X; listening to that speech encouraged him to step to the forefront of fighting racial discrimination in Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, Frank B. Mesiah attended Buffalo State Teachers College, graduating in 1961 with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and in 1969 with a master's degree in administration and supervision; and

WHEREAS, While working as a teacher, Frank B. Mesiah joined with other black and white residents to protest the de facto segregation of Buffalo's Public Schools; his dedication led to the integration of Buffalo schools in 1976; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his illustrious career in education, Frank B. Mesiah served as the Media Coordinator and Assistant Director of School

Integration for Buffalo schools; he was also a part time instructor at both Canisius College and Cornell University Buffalo Labor Studies Program, where he taught courses on managing diversity, sexual harassment prevention, and other subjects; and

WHEREAS, This extraordinary man went on to become an educational planner with Erie 1 BOCES before taking a position handling discrimination cases with the State Department of Labor, a role he served for 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Frank B. Mesiah also advocated for the concerns of the black community from many platforms, most prominently as President of the Black Educators Association and President of the Buffalo Branch NAACP from 1996 to 2016; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, he was instrumental in opening Buffalo police and firefighter positions to minorities, including African-Americans, women and other groups; and

WHEREAS, A true asset to society, Frank B. Mesiah served on then Governor Mario Cuomo's Advisory Committee on Black Affairs, and the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority; and

WHEREAS, In addition, he was a member of the Board of Directors of the Greater Buffalo Development Foundation, Vice Chairman of the Western New York Public Broadcasting Corporation, Vice President of BUILD, Secretary of the Black Leadership Forum, Secretary of the Afro American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier, Vice President of Everywomen's Opportunity Center, and Project Director of the Black American Museum & Cultural Center in Niagara Falls; and

WHEREAS, Frank B. Mesiah was the proud recipient of numerous awards

and accolades, including the NAACP Medgar Evers Award, Evans-Young Urban League Award, SUNY Buffalo State's Outstanding Alumni Award, Erie County Bar Association's Justice Award, YMCA Greater Buffalo Award, New York State Employees Brotherhood Award, and a Buffalo News 1986 Citizen of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Frank B. Mesiah passed away on Friday, April 27, 2018, at the age of 89; he is survived by three daughters, Leza, Nicolette and Francesca; and a brother, Clarence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Frank B. Mesiah posthumously upon the occasion of his designation as recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual by the New York State Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Frank B. Mesiah.