

2017-K1215

Assembly Resolution No. 1215

BY: M. of A. Gantt

CELEBRATING the Bicentennial of the birth of Frederick Douglass, the noted African-American orator, journalist, and anti-slavery leader who was a longtime resident of New York State

WHEREAS, Born in 1818 as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, Americans celebrate this great statesman's birth each year on February 14th; and

WHEREAS, At the young age of 20, Frederick Douglass escaped slavery, and moved to the northeastern part of the United States; he eventually found sanctuary in Rochester, New York; and

WHEREAS, In 1848, Frederick Douglass became a "stationmaster" on the Underground Railroad, where he helped hundreds of people escape slavery through his home in Rochester; and

WHEREAS, A great believer in women's suffrage, Frederick Douglass participated in the First Women's Rights Convention, in Seneca Falls, New York, on July 19, 1848; and

WHEREAS, On December 3, 1847, Frederick Douglass established The North Star, an abolitionist newspaper based out of Rochester; the four-page weekly publication gained notoriety amongst the abolitionist

movement, despite facing local backlash with the New York Herald; and

WHEREAS, Eventually The North Star merged with the Liberty Party Paper to form Frederick Douglass' Paper in 1851; the anti-slavery newspaper ran until 1860; and

WHEREAS, During the American Civil War, Frederick Douglass served as a consultant to President Abraham Lincoln; through this position, he was instrumental in African Americans being granted the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, In March of 1874, Frederick Douglass became the President of Freedman's Savings and Trust Company; three years later, he was the first African American appointed to the title of United States Marshall of the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass' works are considered classics of American autobiography; his memoir, Narrative of the Life of Frederick, an American Slave, was influential in fueling the abolitionist movement in America; and

WHEREAS, He published two more autobiographies, My Bondage and My Freedom in 1855, and Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in 1881; and

WHEREAS, In addition to his writing skills, Frederick Douglass was a brilliant orator who famously offered powerful words on the equality of people, whether black, female or Native American; his passionate 4th of July speech, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" was delivered at an event organized by the Rochester Anti-Slavery Sewing Society on July 5, 1852; and

WHEREAS, The well-known speech was later distributed as a pamphlet,

and is still studied in literature classes today; some people regard it as the greatest anti-slavery oration ever given; and

WHEREAS, A true social reformer, Frederick Douglass died on February 20, 1895, in Washington, D.C.; funeral services were held in the Rochester Central Presbyterian Church in Rochester, and he was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery, Rochester; and

WHEREAS, The City of Rochester proclaimed 2018 as "The Year of Frederick Douglass," encouraging the entire community to join in celebration of the life and legacy of Rochester's favorite son, legendary social reformer Frederick Douglass; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recall and honor individuals such as Frederick Douglass, longtime New York State resident, fittingly recognizing their valued contributions and publicly acknowledging their endeavors which have enhanced the basic humanity among us all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the Bicentennial of the birth of Frederick Douglass, the noted African-American orator, journalist, and anti-slavery leader who was a longtime resident of New York State.