

2017-J5457

Senate Resolution No. 5457

BY: Senator KENNEDY

MOURNING the death of Richard Lipsitz Sr., prominent Buffalo attorney, philanthropist and devoted member of his community

WHEREAS, The quality and character of life in this Nation, and the great State of New York, is reflective of the purposeful lives and good works of those patriotic and civic-minded community members who dedicate their lives and careers to the service of others; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is moved to publicly mourn the death of those prominent citizens whose lifework and purposeful endeavors have served to enrich and enhance the quality and character of life for others in their community and the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Richard Lipsitz Sr. of Buffalo, New York passed away on Friday, May 18, 2018, at the age of 97; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Lafayette High School at the young age of 15, Richard Lipsitz Sr. earned his degree from the University at Buffalo three years later; he obtained his law degree from University at Buffalo Law School in 1942; and

WHEREAS, Richard Lipsitz Sr. was then drafted into the United States Army where he proudly served his country as a Lieutenant under General

Douglas MacArthur during World War II; in this capacity, he was responsible for the interrogation of Japanese civilians and labor leaders to ascertain their roles, if any, in the fascist Japanese government; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service, Richard Lipsitz Sr. returned to his hometown; in 1946, he left Buffalo to take a job with the San Juan, Puerto Rico, National Labor Relations Board; and

WHEREAS, Richard Lipsitz Sr. returned to Western New York one year later, and formed a law partnership with his brother-in-law, which is currently known as Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria, et al; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his distinguished law career, Richard Lipsitz Sr. was a renowned civil liberties attorney, specializing in union-side labor relations; much of his non-labor legal work was done on a pro bono basis for clients who had very little money; and

WHEREAS, Richard Lipsitz Sr. also successfully defended many individuals who were persecuted because of alleged ties to the Communist Party during the McCarthy era of American politics; and

WHEREAS, Richard Lipsitz Sr.'s most famous case was tried in front of the United States Supreme Court in 1967; the decision in this case, which involved a requirement that professors at the University at Buffalo take a loyalty oath to maintain employment, struck down the Feinberg Law and protected the freedom of association and academic freedom under the First Amendment; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, after more than four decades of service, Richard Lipsitz Sr. officially retired, however, he maintained a number of clients until his last arbitration in 2011; and

WHEREAS, A proud Buffalonian, Richard Lipsitz, Sr. set an example for all by exemplifying what it means to give of oneself; he was a beautiful light in the lives of all those with whom he came in contact; and

WHEREAS, Predeceased by his wife, the former Rita Green, Richard Lipsitz Sr. is survived by his daughter, Nan Haynes, a retired law professor with the University at Buffalo Law School; two sons, Richard Lipsitz Jr., President of the Western New York Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO; and John Lipsitz, partner at Lipsitz and Ponterio; five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Richard Lipsitz Sr.'s life was a portrait of service, a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all he served and befriended; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to mourn the death of Richard Lipsitz Sr., prominent Buffalo attorney, philanthropist and devoted member of his community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Richard Lipsitz Sr.