

2017-J5462

Senate Resolution No. 5462

BY: Senator LITTLE

COMMENDING Louis L. Oakes 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, 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, 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 peace-time, deserve a special salute from this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Louis L. Oakes 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, In addition to this prestigious award, Louis L. Oakes has been inducted into the 45th South Dakota Veterans Hall of Fame; 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, Louis Levi Oakes was born on the Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne; currently, he is an enrolled member of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe; and

WHEREAS, After registering for the United States Army at the age of 18, Louis L. Oakes proudly served his country for six years as a Technician 4th Grade, with Company B's 442nd Signal Battalion; he and a group of other Akwesasne Mohawks received their training as code talkers while stationed in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, the Mohawk language was one of 33 Native languages used to send communications between United States forces; the Native American talkers' coded messages will always be known as those that could not be deciphered by the Japanese; and

WHEREAS, Louis L. Oakes served as a code talker in the South Pacific, New Guinea and Philippines theatres during World War II; for his meritorious service, he was awarded the Silver Star; and

WHEREAS, Upon the completion of his military service on February 15, 1946, Louis L. Oakes returned to New York, and served as an ironworker in Buffalo for 30 years; later, he was employed by the Mohawk Territory Highway Department in Akwesasne before he officially retired; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, the United States Congress passed the Code Talkers Recognition Act to honor every Native American code talker who served in the United States military during World War I or World War II; and

WHEREAS, At the age of 95, Louis L. Oakes is the sole-surviving

member of the Akwesasne Mohawk Code Talkers to be awarded the prestigious Congressional Silver Medal for his service during the Second World War; and

WHEREAS, Residents of this great State must never forget the courage with which these men and women served their country, and must recognize that no greater debt is owed than that owed to those who gave their lives for their beloved Nation and to those who continue to be missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited his patriotism both at home and abroad, Louis L. Oakes demonstrated his love for his country and merits forevermore, the highest respect of his State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, Our Nation's veterans deserve to be recognized, commended and thanked by the people of the State of New York for their service and for their dedication to their communities, their State and their Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Louis L. Oakes 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 Louis L. Oakes.