

State of New York

- Legislature of Erie County -

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Almighty God, in His infinite wisdom, on Thursday, March 12, 2015, removed from our midst one of his own, Mr. James Herbert Martin, in whose death we have lost a legendary jazz trailblazer, and whose family has lost a kind and devoted member. He was a deeply spiritual man who credited “the Most High (God) with whatever success he experienced in life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James Herbert Martin was born in Asheville, North Carolina, Buncombe County on May 27th, 1933 to parents John W. Martin Sr. and Emogene [McCorkle] Martin, along with his siblings Robert, John (Spider), Emogene, Kenneth and Daisy; where he was given the nickname “Pappy”; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James “Pappy” Martin was blessed with two sons James and Damon, two daughters Dawn and Denise, ten grandchildren, seventeen great grandchildren, a great-great-grandson, and a host of family and friends throughout the community, he will always be remembered for his mission to expand the community’s knowledge and understanding of the importance of Jazz as an art form; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James “Pappy” Martin and his family migrated from the south to Niagara Falls, New York in 1935, and he went on to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in psychology from Daemen College and a Master’s Degree in Generalist and Students with Disabilities Program at SUNY Buffalo State. He later worked as a youth coordinator at the West Seneca Development Center for 25 years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James “Pappy” Martin was a member of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Eastern Region whose mission is “To Promote and Develop the Growth of Tennis”, Mr. “Pappy” Martin supported this mission and founded the General Bass/Pappy Martin Inner City Tennis Program at Martin Luther King Jr. Park in Buffalo, NY where hundreds of young people were introduced to the sport of tennis. Mr. “Pappy” continued this program for over a decade and the School of Music performed annually for the Wegmans Amherst Street Black History Program; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James “Pappy” Martin was a renowned bassist and trumpet player, he founded and directed the legendary Love Supreme Jazz Ensemble with Chu Nero (tenor saxophone), William Murphy (tenor saxophone), Bernard Kunz (electric guitar), and Tim Webb (drums, percussion), and later founded the Love Supreme School of Music that focused on music lessons with instruments, music theory, and the science of music; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James “Pappy” Martin was a community activist who was energized and inspired to follow the instructions of Minister Louis Farrakhan who urged men to “go back to your community and do one thing to improve it” during the historic Million Man March in 1995. Mr. “Pappy” Martin, along with his friends Mr. Darryl Peoples, Mr. Steve Porter, and former Council President James Pitts answered the call and founded the Masten Jazz Festival. Under Mr. “Pappy” Martin’s leadership, the Masten Jazz Festival Preservation Society was formed. The Masten Jazz Festival has continued to be a premier festival that begins the summer festival season and it will celebrate its 20th Year Anniversary in July 2015; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James “Pappy” Martin has received many accolades and awards for his volunteer work and for his work to keep the culture of jazz alive and well in the inner city and throughout the City of Buffalo from community and civic organizations such NAACP, Buffalo Urban League, Christian Science Church, Durham Memorial AME Zion Church, Shiloh Baptist Church, Colored Musicians Club, Community Action Organization of Buffalo and Erie County (CAO), Daemen College, and MOOT Center to name a few; and

WHEREAS, Mr. James “Pappy” Martin is a local jazz icon that has played with such national and local greats as Aretha Franklin, Al Hibbler, Ruth Brown, Johnny Griffin, Billy Taylor, and Betty Carter, Wynton Marsalis, McCoy Tyner, Roy Ayers and others. He has traveled throughout the United States playing music with his late brother John “Spider” Martin in many famous nightclubs in the area including Little Harlem, Pine Grill, Revilot, Royal Arms, Moon Glow, Shalimar, Town Casino, Ontario House, and Blue Note; and has participated in area jazz events such as the Pine Grill Reunion, Ontario Reunion, Lewiston Jazz Festival, Wegmans Jazz Series, and M&T Concert Series.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature does hereby mourn the passing of Mr. James “Pappy” Martin, and pauses in its deliberations to honor and celebrate his life, his love for the community, and his legacy; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature offers our thoughts, prayers, and deepest sympathy to Mr. James “Pappy” Martin’s family, friends, and beloved community members on the loss of this unsung hero and extraordinary jazz musician who has touched the lives of many.


HON. BARBARA MILLER-WILLIAMS
1st District Legislator


HON. BETTY JEAN GRANT
Democratic Leader, 2nd District Legislator