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MEMORIAL RESOLUTION IN REMEMBRANCE OF
WILLIAM Y. COOPER

WHEREAS, Almighty God, in His infinite wisdom, on February 26, 2016, removed from our midst William Y. Cooper, in whose death we have lost a sincere and loyal friend, as well as a valued and respected teacher and artist, and whose family has lost a kind and devoted member; and

WHEREAS, William Y. Cooper a native of Buffalo earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Buffalo in 1975 and he was later employed by the Buffalo Public School System as a Certified Art Teacher where he provided a positive educational experience for hundreds of students; and

WHEREAS, since 1995, William Y. Cooper maintained a studio at Buffalo Arts Studio where served as mentor to hundreds of young artists in training while creating over 40 murals which are prominently displayed and remain on view throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cooper described his thematic and stylistic approach as "Afrocentric" noting that his world view was rooted in an African frame of reference and a deep abiding sense of the Creator and through community events, mural projects and meetings with students he worked to spread his approach to the next generation; and

WHEREAS, William Cooper has exhibited his work in over fifteen solo exhibitions, showing his work in Buffalo, Niagara Falls and the National Art Gallery of Ghana, West Africa and in 2001, he was one of ten artists selected for the Pan American Exhibition "Art Across Borders" project, where he created five large murals for the Women's Pavilion celebrating women from African-American history; and

WHEREAS, William Cooper authored a young adult novel "77 Jackson Street, rear" in 2010 and a children's play "Nakai and the Red Shoes" produced by the Paul Robeson Theatre in 2007; and

WHEREAS, his iconic mural depicting a mélange of jazz musicians adorns the front of the Colored Musicians Club and this reflects his deep love and understanding of the history and importance of the Club to the City and its residents; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Cooper has been honored by The Arts Council of Buffalo & Erie County's DEC/CIP, Grant in 1996, A Professional Artist Award in 1997 and by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, in 1997 and he was a member of the National Conference of Artists, and served as a member of

the Alliance of African American Artists in America, he also founded and led the Afrocentric Artists' Collective; and

WHEREAS, Mr. cooper was a family oriented man, as he was the beloved husband of Glendora Johnson-Cooper, affectionate, devoted father of four sons, Michael Stubbs, Yancy Cooper, Joel Cooper and Juan King; a daughter, Sharelle Hennigan; three grandchildren and also survived by hundreds of students and friends.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature does hereby mourn the passing of William Y. Cooper and pause in its deliberations to honor and celebrate the Life of Mr. Cooper, and offer our thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathy to Mr. Cooper's family, friends, and colleagues.