STATE OF NEW YORK
LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY
BUFFALO, NY, DECEMBER 19, 2019

Honoring Judge James A. W. McLeod on His Retirement

WHEREAS, Judge James A. W. McLeod, a native of Utica, New York, is the great nephew of educator, stateswoman, philanthropist, humanitarian, and civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune; and

WHEREAS, Judge McLeod attended Herkimer Community College, where he earned an Associate’s Degree in 1969 and also served as the inaugural president of the Student Senate; and

WHEREAS, he later graduated with his Bachelor’s Degree from SUNY Fredonia State and then attended the University at Buffalo Law School, where in 1975, he earned his Juris Doctor Degree; and

WHEREAS, Mr. McLeod became the first and only African American attorney to head the Buffalo/Erie County Legal Aid Bureau; and

WHEREAS, Judge McLeod has served with distinction and honor in Buffalo City Court since 1999; and

WHEREAS, Judge McLeod created the first “young adult” court in Western New York dedicated to handling criminal cases for 16, 17 and 18-year-olds as an effort to reduce their re-engagement in the criminal justice system and to help them improve their lives; and

WHEREAS, in addition to extensive private practice, McLeod’s career includes serving in public service as a County Family Court Hearing Examiner, Assistant County Attorney, Public Defender and Confidential Law Clerk for a State Supreme Court Judge; and

WHEREAS, upon joining the City Court Bench, his advocacy and activism with the Administrative Judge for the 8th Judicial District resulted in the appointments of African-Americans to prominent roles in the court system outside of New York City such as Sharon Thomas, the first Chief Court Clerk; Clarence Charity, the first Deputy Chief Court Clerk; and Ana Le Grange, the first 2nd Deputy Chief Court; and

WHEREAS, throughout his tireless work in the court room, Judge McLeod has been very active in the community and getting involved in many affiliations such as: founding member of the Black Leadership Forum, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, NAACP, Buffalo Urban League, Board of the Humboldt-Ferry YMCA and Kaleida Health Board; and

WHEREAS, in addition, he has lectured for the New York State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program, as well as schools and community groups; and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 2019, he is retiring as a judge from Buffalo City Court.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature pauses in its deliberations to honor and congratulate James McLeod on his dedicated service to the City of Buffalo and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors in his well-earned retirement.
Hon. April N.M. Baskin  
Chair of the Legislature  
Erie County Legislator, 2nd District

Hon. John Bruso  
Majority Leader  
Erie County Legislator, 8th District

Hon. Joseph C. Lorigo  
Minority Leader  
Erie County Legislator, 10th District

Hon. Howard J. Johnson Jr.  
Erie County Legislator, 1st District

Hon. Lisa M. Chimera  
Erie County Legislator, 3rd District

Hon. Kevin R. Hardwick  
Erie County Legislator, 4th District

Hon. Thomas A. Loughran  
Erie County Legislator, 5th District

Hon. Edward A. Rath, III  
Erie County Legislator, 6th District

Hon. Timothy J. Meyers  
Erie County Legislator, 7th District

Hon. Lynne M. Dixon  
Erie County Legislator, 9th District

Hon. John J. Mills  
Erie County Legislator, 11th District

Robert M. Graber  
Clerk of the Legislature