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STATE OF NEW YORK

LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY

BUFFALO, N.Y., FEBRUARY 7, 2019 A.D.

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION IN REMEMBRANCE OF TIBOR BARANSKI SR.

WHEREAS, Almighty God, in His infinite wisdom, on January 20, 2019, removed from our midst Tibor Baranski Sr., in whose death we have lost a true hero, a valued and respected citizen, and whose family has lost a kind and devoted member; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr. was born in 1922, and grew up in Budapest, Hungary; and

WHEREAS, In 1944, at the age of 22, Tibor Baranski Sr. returned home from studying in a Catholic monastery to a city under tight control of German Nazi forces, whose last efforts in a crumbling war effort was to bring one last devastating sweep against Hungarian Jews before they were forced out of the city; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr. sought officials who could intervene on behalf of some friends, a Jewish family named Szekeres, which he managed to talk his way into a meeting with Monsignor Angelo Rotta, the Catholic papal nuncio, who was impressed with Baranski and recruited him to help with the larger effort of saving thousands of Jews in immediate danger of being sent to concentration camps, Tibor Baranski Sr. became executive secretary of what was called the Jewish Protection Movement; and

WHEREAS, Making one mistake would have meant his own death, Tibor Baranski Sr., through raw confidence and by flashing papers provided by Monsignor Rotta, managed to win the release of dozens of captives, and where for the duration of the war, he used similar documents and every desperate ploy he could imagine to shield roughly 3,000 Jews in a protected sector of apartment complexes, and where through his work, they survived; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr.'s favorite story involved a request to borrow a Rolls-Royce from Monsignor Rotta, a means of creating a sense of wealth and stature, persuaded another young man to pretend to be his driver, then used that masquerade of influence to bluff his way into a factory where roughly 2,000 Jews were confined, set for transport to the camps; and

WHEREAS, In 1945, the Soviets captured Budapest, and Tibor Baranski Sr. was apprehended and nearly died on what amounted to a death march toward Russia, but was released to a local hospital when a guard took pity on him; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr. returned to Budapest, but would be imprisoned again for five more years by the Communists, before he finally went to Rome in 1953, seeking aid for the Hungarian revolution, which ultimately failed at the time, making it unsafe for him to return home; and

WHEREAS, It was in Italy that Tibor Baranski Sr. met the love of his life, Katalin, who had built a career in cancer research, and the two of them made their way to Canada and eventually settled in Buffalo, where they raised their family; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr. became an educator, a teacher with a staggering perspective on both the brightest and most savage aspects of the world, and where over the years he had a close and life-changing impact on hundreds of students from Eastern Europe who saw him as a mentor as they studied at Catholic universities in the Buffalo area; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr. was honored, on a list that includes such fellow humanitarians as Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg, as Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, Israel; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr. is survived by two sons, Tibor Jr. and Dr. Peter Forgach; and one daughter, Kati Spangler; along with both grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr. had a fierce and unshakable Catholic faith that served as a lighthouse during times when pain, sickness, or terror might have broken many spirits, and where in those last moments when his son, Dr. Peter Forgach, sat at his bedside and said the rosary, the ancient Catholic ritual of comfort, faith and mystery, Tibor Baranski Sr. did not speak, but opened his eyes, reached up and held onto the beads; and

WHEREAS, Tibor Baranski Sr., having himself been a beacon for thousands, entered into rest Sunday, January 20, 2019, at the age of 96.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature does hereby mourn the passing of Tibor Baranski Sr., and pause in its deliberations on February 7, 2019, to honor and celebrate the life of Tibor Baranski Sr., and offer our thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathy to his family, friends, and all who knew him.

PETER J. SAVAGE III
*Chairman of the
Erie County Legislature*

JOSEPH C. LORIGO
*Minority Leader of the
Erie County Legislature*

APRIL N.M. BASKIN
*Majority Leader of the
Erie County Legislature*

EDWARD A. RATH, III
Erie County Legislator

BARBARA MILLER-WILLIAMS
Erie County Legislator

JOHN J. MILLS
Erie County Legislator

THOMAS A. LOUGHRAN
Erie County Legislator

LYNNE M. DIXON
Erie County Legislator

TIMOTHY MEYERS
Erie County Legislator

KEVIN R. HARDWICK
Erie County Legislator

JOHN BRUSO
Erie County Legislator

ROBERT M. GRABER
Clerk of the Erie County Legislature