

STATE OF NEW YORK
LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY

Buffalo, NY, May 21, 2020

*In Remembrance of Joey G. Giambra
Civic Legend and Talented Artist*

WHEREAS, Almighty God, in His infinite wisdom, on May 14, 2020, removed from our midst *Joseph G. ("Joey") Giambra* in whose death we have lost a loving husband, father, grandfather, esteemed and idolized citizen, and whose family has lost a leader, kind and devoted member; and

WHEREAS, Joey Giambra was born in 1933 on Georgia Street on Buffalo's lower West Side and attended Hutchinson Central Technical High School where he formed a band that maintained a steady business at weddings, parties and other events; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Giambra would go on to earn his Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from SUNY Buffalo State; and

WHEREAS, Joey was a Buffalo icon to many generations throughout his tenure during his years as a police officer and later a sergeant detective with the Buffalo Police Department, a self-taught jazz trumpeter, a pianist, an actor, a singer and songwriter, a restaurant owner, a filmmaker, a poet, a chef, the author of four books, a historian and a one-time candidate for mayor of Buffalo; and

WHEREAS, he spoke fluent Sicilian and his relentless creativity and productivity did not diminish with age; and

WHEREAS, as an actor, Giambra appeared in "Cold Brook," a movie filmed and directed in Buffalo by Cheektowaga native William Fichtner, and during the same period, Mr. Giambra released "Sam Noto: A Life in Jazz," a biography of his longtime friend and a jazz trumpet luminary, and completed "Joey Giambra's Legacy: Up Close and Personal," his recording debut as a vocalist; and

WHEREAS, his album wrapped in the brilliance of celebrated jazz saxophonist Don "Red" Menza and included "I Love You, Buffalo," a song Giambra originally wrote for another icon, the late Jackie Jocko; and

WHEREAS, Joey also was a restaurateur who operated the Rib Crib on East Chippewa Street and founded the Hard Times Cafe, an Italian restaurant that started up in Allentown and later moved to Hertel Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Joey's long writing career included "Bread and Onions," a performance piece inspired by the West Side of his childhood, and "La Terra Promessa," a documentary that chronicles the Italian American immigrant experience in Western New York; and

WHEREAS, his many movie appearances included such films as "Hide in Plain Sight," "Buffalo '66" and "Marshall"; and

WHEREAS, Joey was a husband of 65 years to Shirley (Tomaselli) Giambra; loving father of Gregory J. Giambra and the late Michele Giambra and father-in-law of Wendy Fortunato; cherished grandfather of Gregory J. Giambra, Jr. and Kyle Richardson; dearest son of the late Josephine and Gregorio Giambra; son-in-law of Lillian and Daniel Tomaselli; caring brother of the late Dolores (Charles) Argo and the late Concetta (Anthony) LoTempio; adored uncle of Jo Frances (Joseph) Cipolla, Vincent (Lucille) LoTempio, Maria(Mark) Dines, Melissa LoTempio Hoffman, Cheryl Ann Tomaselli and Renee Tomaselli; and is also survived by loving cousins, great-nieces, great-nephews, great-great-nieces and great-great-nephews; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Giambra thought, spoke and sang to the distinctive rhythm and melody of the city's West Side as he had known it from childhood, a connection that remained at the heart of who he was as he blessed our county with his many talents and he will forever be loved and missed by our community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature does hereby mourn the passing of *Joey Giambra* and pause in its deliberations to honor and pay tribute to the life of Mr. Giambra, whose lifelong devotion to our community blessed us with his multitude of talents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature express its sympathy and condolences to Joey Giambra's family and to his many friends, knowing full well that he has received his eternal and glorified reward in Heaven, having heard the consoling words of the Master, "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*"

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

Robert M. Graber
Clerk of the Erie County Legislature