WHEREAS, Almighty God, in His infinite wisdom, on December 24, 2020, removed from our midst Richard W. Welker in whose death we have lost a loving father, grandfather, valued and respected citizen, and whose family has lost a leader, kind and devoted member; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Welker, a product of the Town of Tonawanda, would go on to attend Ariel Gunning School in Florida where he finished in the top 10 of his class; and

WHEREAS, in 1943, he was sent to North Africa and was stationed in French Morocco, where for the next 18 months during World War II he flew every other day on convoy patrol looking for submarines, spending more than 2,500 hours in the air; and

WHEREAS, during his off-time in Algiers, North Africa, he continued to play baseball and took up boxing and earned the base’s Middleweight Championship; and

WHEREAS, he had a successful minor league career with the Phillies, but when he did not see the chance for promotion to the big leagues, he returned home to Buffalo, and played baseball for the renowned MUNY League champion Simon Pures’ team; and

WHEREAS, during this time, Rich also became a classic bowler, golfer, outdoorsman, and a successful automobile salesman and as a classic bowler, he was a member of an all left-handed team for several years and made eight appearances on the former Beat the Champ television show; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Welker was a major contributor to improving Buffalo’s motor sales as a long and distinguished sales career at Brost Motors on Main Street in the 1950s; and

WHEREAS, a few years later he went to work at Awald/Paddock Chevrolet in Kenmore until his retirement in 1989; and

WHEREAS, he achieved top salesman for 25 years and was inducted into the Legion of Leaders for Chevrolet; and

WHEREAS, he also spent 20 years as a member of the Erie County Sheriff’s Marine Division Reserve; and
WHEREAS, his great love for the outdoors led him to travel the world on many excursions, guided fishing and large game hunting trips; and

WHEREAS, when his baseball career ended, he was inducted into the Buffalo Softball Hall of Fame in 1977 and was inducted into the WNY Baseball Hall of Fame in 1997; and

WHEREAS, to those who knew Richard best said his tireless efforts symbolized his greatest strength, inspiring the hometown region he loved and accomplishing many things throughout his life such as: playing baseball as a youngster at the Butler Mitchell Club in Buffalo, honing his skills while serving in the United States Navy during World War II and being a member of the Philadelphia Phillies organization for seven seasons; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his wife, Marie “Reggie” (nee LoDestro) Welker; and two sisters, Jean Willis and Shirley Ayotte; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by three children, Michele Rejent, Paulette Welker and Christine Flaschner; two step-children, Michael Phelps and Karen Berns Phelps; and two grandchildren.

WHEREAS, it is the sense of this Legislative Body to honor and pay tribute to the life of Richard W. Welker whose lifelong dedication to God, family, baseball and community are an inspiration to be admired, emulated and honored.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature does hereby mourn the passing of Richard W. Welker and pause in its deliberations to recognize his praiseworthy life, his love of family and for his commitment and devotion to the betterment of our community; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature express its sympathy and condolences to the Welker 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.”

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

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Robert M. Graber
Clerk of the Erie County Legislature