

2011-J3425

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring Sy Berger upon the occasion of his induction into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame on April 29, 2012

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to acknowledge outstanding individuals from the sporting world who have distinguished themselves through exceptional performance, attaining unprecedented success and the highest level of personal achievement; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Sy Berger, "The Father of the Modern Baseball Card," upon the occasion of his induction into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame at its 20th Annual National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony to be held on Sunday, April 29, 2012 at the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and Museum; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1993, the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and Museum is dedicated to honoring Jewish athletes, coaches, executives and other sports figures who have distinguished themselves in the world of sports; and

WHEREAS, Housed at the Suffolk Y Jewish Community Center in Commack, New York, each year, the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and Museum proudly inducts outstanding athletes who have distinguished themselves through their exceptional performance, attaining extraordinary success and the highest level of personal accomplishment, into its Hall of Fame, along with coaches, league commissioners and presidents, broadcasters, authors, scholar athletes and others such as media executive Sy Berger; and

WHEREAS, Rockville Centre resident Sy Berger was an employee of the Topps company for more than 50 years; his first day at Topps was also the first day Topps began to produce Bazooka Gum; in Autumn 1951, then a 28-year-old veteran of World War II, Sy Berger designed the 1952 Topps baseball card set with Woody Gelman on the kitchen table of his apartment on Alabama Avenue in Brooklyn; the card design included a player's name, photo, facsimile autograph, team name and logo on the front and the player's height, weight, bats, throws, birthplace, birthday, stats,

and a short biography on the back, an emblematic basic design which is still in use; and

WHEREAS, Topps baseball cards are nothing short of an American institution and an icon representing what was a rite of passage for generations of youngsters; and

WHEREAS, Sy Berger worked for Topps from 1947-1997 and served the company as a consultant for another five years, becoming a well-known figure on the baseball scene, and the face of Topps to major league baseball players, whom he signed up annually and paid in merchandise, such as refrigerators and carpeting; and

WHEREAS, In the trenches, and later in the boardroom, at Topps for nearly all of that historic 50 years, Sy Berger's name is forever intertwined with baseball cards just as Walt Disney's is with lovable cartoon characters; and

WHEREAS, Sy Berger conjured up designs for some of the most revered baseball cards; friend and confidant of hundreds of ballplayers, his job was, in part, comprised of every young man's dream: hanging around in major-league dugouts and befriending the greats of the game; and

WHEREAS, A man who rose through the ranks at Topps from a summer internship to Vice President of Licensing, Sy Berger has always been the first to concede that he may have had the very best job in the world; and

WHEREAS, Sy Berger was just a young kid when he joined the Topps family and he realizes and much appreciates that they knew he was a sports nut and just let him go do it; no one ever told him either how to negotiate with the ballplayers, they just said, "go do it" and he did it without equal; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Sy Berger upon the occasion of his induction into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame on April 29, 2012; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Sy Berger.