Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0097-2022	**Version:** *	**Name:**	Recognizing April 12th annually as Garífuna Heritage Day in NYC.
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Title:	Resolution recognizing April 12th annually as Garífuna Heritage Day in the City of New York			
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Attachments:	1. Res. No. 97, 2. March 24, 2022 - Stated Meeting Agenda, 3. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 3-24-22, 4. Minutes of the Stated Meeting - March 24, 2022			

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/24/2022	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
3/24/2022	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2023	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 97

Resolution recognizing April 12th annually as Garífuna Heritage Day in the City of New York

By Council Members Salamanca, Hanif, Stevens, Restler, Sanchez and Hudson

Whereas, The Garífuna people are descendants of the indigenous Island Carib people of the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean and formerly enslaved Central and West Africans, who either escaped plantations or mines on nearby islands or survived Spanish shipwrecks off the coast of St. Vincent in 1635; and

Whereas, Unlike much of the Caribbean archipelago following Christopher Columbus' arrival in 1492, the Island Carib people were among the most successful Native American groups in resisting European conquest and colonization; and

Whereas, After a time of peaceful coexistence with French settlers, with whom the Garífuna formed an alliance against rival colonial powers, a series of wars erupted among the British, Spaniards and French, out of which the British emerged victorious in 1796; and

Whereas, In 1797, nearly 150 years after Barbados and St. Kitts were settled and successfully controlled

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by the British, St. Vincent became the last indigenous stronghold in the Caribbean when a few thousand Garífuna were deported to Roatán, an island off the coast of Spanish-controlled Honduras; and

Whereas, Over the next century, the Garífuna spread out along the Central American coastland and became heavily involved in the banana exportation industry until the 1940s, when a deadly epidemic spread among banana plants, forcing companies to shut down and their employees out of work; and

Whereas, Looking for work, many Garífuna men turned to seafaring businesses and during World War II served in the merchant marines for Great Britain and the United States, eventually settling in the port cities of Los Angeles, New York and New Orleans; and

Whereas, In 1823, William Henry Brown, the first American playwright of African descent, wrote "The Drama of King Shotaway," recognized as the first Black drama of American theater, which has as its subject the 1795 Island Carib peoples' defense of St. Vincent against colonization by the British; and

Whereas, Born of a fusion of race and ethnicities, and after more than 300 years of contact with British, French and Spanish colonizers, the Garífuna have maintained aspects of their ancestral culture and full use of their ancestral language, both of which are noted for being distinct; and

Whereas, The Garífuna historically were punished for expressing their culture and language in Belize, Guatemala, the Grenadines, Honduras, Nicaragua and St. Vincent, where they remain minorities in their respective countries; and

Whereas, In 2001, in recognition of the importance of preserving traditional and popular culture under threat of disappearing in an era of globalization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) awarded the title of "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangibles Heritage of Humanity" to the Garífuna Language, Dance and Music of Belize; and

Whereas, Despite many contributions to the social and economic fiber of New York City, the Garífuna community remained relatively invisible until 1990, when a devastating fire at the Happy Land Social Club in the Bronx claimed the lives of 87 people, of whom more than 70 percent were of Garífuna descent; and

Whereas, Today, the Garífuna community makes a significant contribution to the cultural tapestry that defines New York City, which is home to the largest Garífuna population outside of Honduras, with an estimated 200,000 Garífuna living in the South Bronx, Harlem, Brownsville and East New York; and

Whereas, In observance of the anniversary of the forcible transfer of the Garífuna from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, March 11th through April 12th has been designated as Garífuna-American Heritage Month in the State of New York and April 12, 2018 will mark the 221st Anniversary of the expulsion; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York recognizes April 12th annually as Garífuna Heritage Day in the City of New York.

Session 12
NLB
LS #1118
2/27/2022

Session 11
CGR
LS #6333
Res. #341-2018

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