

PROCLAMATION



City and County of Denver

Proclamation No. CP16-0990 Honoring Harry Tuft, founder and long-time owner of Denver Folklore Center

WHEREAS, Harry Tuft fell in love with music listening to his parents' records of the big bands and great singers of the 1940s and '50s; and

WHEREAS, after dabbling briefly with piano and clarinet, Harry discovered the ukulele as a 13-year old camper and moved on to guitar on a trip to Europe between his junior and senior years in college; and

WHEREAS, Harry became involved in the folk music scene of the late 1950s and early 1960s, beginning with Sunday song circles at the Gilded Cage in his native Philadelphia, and moving on to any number of Philadelphia and New York coffee shops and other performance venues at the urging of his good friend Dick Weissman; and

WHEREAS, on a whim, in 1960, Harry decided to take a break from his college studies in architecture and take a ski vacation to Colorado, and in addition to enjoying the slopes plied his musical talents in venues from Colorado to California, including the Limelight in Aspen and the Fox & The Hounds in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, while working a variety of odd jobs to make ends meet, Harry realized that neither the odd jobs nor his performing career were bringing in the income he needed to live the life he desired, and took the advice of Hal Neustaedter – owner of Denver's legendary Exodus nightclub - and put together a small nest egg, moved his remaining belongings out to the Mile High City from Philadelphia and opened a music store, the Denver Folklore Center at 608 E. 17th Ave., next to a coffee house called the Green Spider, on March 12, 1962, paying rent of \$55/month; and

WHEREAS, through the years Harry provided a place for musicians from wannabes to professionals to gather, trade techniques, pick up equipment and perform, including locals like Mary Flower, Otis Taylor, Randy Handley, the band Hot Rize, the many talented women of the most carefully pronounced band in show business, the Mother Folkers and many more, as well as musicians from across the country including Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Utah Phillips, Arlo Guthrie, Elizabeth Cotton, Muddy Waters, John Denver, Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs, Doc Watson, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Geoff Muldaur, Leo Kottke and dozens more, and

WHEREAS, in 1979, with business in a downturn, and the concert hall losing money, Harry turned the concert operations over to a group of Folklore Center regulars who reformed as the non-profit Swallow Hill Music Association, that not only is still alive today but has grown to include two home concert halls, a café and the largest music school west of the Mississippi River at 71 E. Yale Ave., with satellite locations around the metro area, and booking concert series for Denver Botanic Gardens and the Arvada Center for the Performing Arts; and

WHEREAS, the original Denver Folklore Center location closed in June of 1980 to make way for a 7-11 store, reopening a few months later for a brief stay on South Broadway, before closing for some ten years until Harry reopened the business again in March of 1993, at 1893 S. Pearl St.; and

WHEREAS, Harry has maintained an active performing career both as a solo artist and together with other performers, most notably, for over 40 years with his friends Steve Abbott and Jack Stanesco as the folk trio Grubstake, performing hundreds of shows at clubs large and small, capped by opening for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and Willie Nelson at Red Rocks Amphitheater, and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Harry was inducted into the Colorado Music Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS Harry reached a time in his life when he craved more time to devote to performing and other pursuits, about 18 months ago he announced his desire to find other ownership for the Folklore Center; and

WHEREAS, in August of this year, a deal was struck to transfer ownership to Harry's friends and supporters Saul Rosenthal and Claude Brachfeld, who intend to retain the long-time staff and the ideals that have kept the business alive and well and an iconic part of Denver's music landscape for the better part of 7 decades; and

WHEREAS, on August 16, Harry retired as owner of the Denver Folklore Center.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That the Council of the City and County of Denver honors Harry M. Tuft for his extraordinary contribution to Denver's music scene and our community as a whole; and declares that today, October 17, 2016 be declared Harry Tuft Day in the City and County of Denver.pass

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Harry M Tuft.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL October 17, 2016

_____ PRESIDENT