

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 26-0972 Honoring Patricia Calhoun for 49 years as the editor of Westword

WHEREAS Patricia “Patty” Calhoun started her journalism career while attending Cornell University and working for the Cornell Daily Sun, the oldest continuously independent college daily in the United States; and

WHEREAS after graduating from Cornell in 1976, Patty and some college friends decided to start a newspaper called The SandPaper on Long Beach Island, New Jersey, a paper that still publishes today; and

WHEREAS, not loving the grit of The SandPaper, Patty decided to head west to Colorado, where she loved the skiing; and

WHEREAS, on Sept. 1, 1977, Patty and colleagues Sandy Widener and Rob Simon launched Westword, a self-styled alternative newspaper, where she took on the role of editor-in-chief and started making a name for the new publication despite Denver already having two robust newspapers, the Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News; and

WHEREAS over the past 49 years Patty and the Westword staff under her direction have covered stories that have both informed and entertained the people of Denver, from the rise of Denver’s own Dog the Bounty Hunter, to hard-hitting investigative journalism about violations around radioactive contamination at Rocky Flats, to hiring the country’s first ever pot critic; and

WHEREAS Patty has been inducted into the Colorado Press Association Hall of Fame, the Association of Alternative Newsmedia Hall of Fame and the Colorado Restaurant Association Hall of Fame; and, in 2019 Patty was named the inaugural recipient of the Association for Alternative Newsmedia’s Lifetime Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS much of Patty’s time at Westword is spent on the mechanics of getting the paper out the door and the content published online, depriving her of the time needed to write the stories she has on the back burner and keeping her from sounding off about the issues on which people need to know more; and

WHEREAS, leading up to the 50th anniversary of Westword, Patty has decided to drop the reins of running the media outlet and instead return to ‘causing a little trouble’ and writing those stories she’s had simmering, leaving the operational issues in the hands of a capable team,

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

Section 1. That the Denver City Council hereby acknowledges and thanks Patricia Calhoun for 49 years of dedicated news leadership in Denver and for making Westword more than an alternative newspaper, but rather an institution for information that matters to the people of Denver.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder 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 Patricia Calhoun.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL June 29, 2026

PRESIDENT

