


# PROCLAMATION



City and County of Denver

## Proclamation No. 20-1563 Honoring Oil Entrepreneur and Philanthropist Sam Gary

**WHEREAS** Samuel Garfinkel, who later changed his last name to Gary, was born November 1, 1926 to Harry and Sadie Garfinkel in New York City; and

**WHEREAS** Sam Gary married Nancy Howard in 1953 and headed west toward the oil fields in Colorado; and

**WHEREAS** driven by the wildcatter determination to strike oil, he found his first major success with the discovery of the Bell Creek Oil Field in Montana in 1967; and

**WHEREAS** the discovery led to an estimated 240 million barrels of oil, making Bell Creek the 84th largest oil field in the country at the time; and

**WHEREAS** the success led to the creation of Gary-Williams Oil Producer, Inc., and the pioneering idea that business and philanthropy can – and should – work together to create opportunities for those who need it most; and

**WHEREAS** in 1976, Sam, along with his wife Nancy, created The Piton Foundation to increase opportunity for Colorado's most vulnerable children and families; and

**WHEREAS**, his passion for doing well by doing good inspired him to use his good fortune to establish and incubate some of Denver's most influential and impactful nonprofits including the Urban Land Conservancy, Denver Preschool Program, Tax Help Colorado, and the Colorado Children's Campaign; and

**WHEREAS**, guided by the vision to ensure all children in Colorado have the opportunity to grow-up healthy and become productive members of their communities, Sam, along with his wife Nancy, launched Gary Community Investments alongside The Piton Foundation to leverage nonprofit and for-profit resources to create impact in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, about investing in the community, Sam said, "I would like to see business people try to solve social problems with the same imagination and energy they use to finance a factory or make a deal. Don't call it philanthropy; call it corporate social investment. Make it integral to business"; and

**WHEREAS** for more than 40 years, Sam's heart for the community made it possible for Gary Community Investments and the Piton Foundation to give more than \$250 million to the community; and

**WHEREAS** his desire to improve the health of all children led them to support a number of efforts, including Children's Hospital in Denver, Children's Medical Center, as well as the creation of the Colorado Children's Healthcare Access Program, which was instrumental in getting children enrolled in Medicaid; and

**WHEREAS** in addition to his philanthropic work, Sam was the visionary behind the redevelopment of the former Stapleton Airport site, transforming it into a sustainable, urban community where today thousands of residents live, work and play; and

**WHEREAS** in honor of his contribution, in 2011, the Denver Public Library renamed the neighborhood's library known today as Sam Gary Branch Library; and

**WHEREAS** Sam was a founding member of the Colorado Forum and spearheaded the creation of Colorado Open Lands, serving as the land conservation's first chair of the board; and

**WHEREAS** from the time he set foot in Colorado until the day he died on November 16, 2020, Sam Gary's legacy serves as a reminder that when it comes to serving others, "what could be, should be."

**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 recognizes and honors Mr. Gary for his significant contributions to the Denver community by declaring December 21, as Sam Gary Day.

**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 his wife Nancy Gary.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL December 21, 2020

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PRESIDENT