



City of Chicago
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R2018-190

Meeting Date: 2/28/2018
Sponsor(s): Hopkins (2)
Type: Resolution
Title: Gratitude and congratulations extended to Ruth Page Center for the Arts for ongoing cultural contributions and upcoming celebration of founder's birthday on March 22, 2018
Committee(s) Assignment:

RESOLUTION HONORING RUTH PAGE

WHEREAS, Ruth Page was a legendary dancer, choreographer and patron who made enormous cultural contributions in Chicago and throughout the world. Her visionary work influenced the growth of theater design, opera ballet, and dance and she achieved worldwide recognition as a true pioneer of dance in America; and

WHEREAS, The City Council has been informed about the exceptional achievements of this woman by the Honorable Brian Hopkins, Alderman of the 2nd Ward; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Page was born on March 22, 1899, in Indianapolis, Indiana. She became a dancer at a young age. In 1917, she attracted the attention of Russian ballerina, Anna Pavlova, and her first professional curtain opened when Pavlova invited her to dance on Pavlova's final South American tour in 1918-19; and

WHEREAS, Ruth later moved to Chicago, Illinois where she studied with the renowned Adolph Bolm. He choreographed *The Birthday of the Infanta* for her at the Auditorium Theater in 1919. From 1922 to 1924, she starred in Irving Berlin's *Music Box Revue*, first on Broadway and then in the touring company; and

WHEREAS, as her life in the art of dance unfolded, she established a record of being first by creating at the forefront of social, political, and artistic issues. She was the first American to dance with Diaghilev's Ballet Russe in 1925. In that spring, she was the first American to commission George Balanchine, another newcomer to the Ballets Russe, to create several ballets for her, *Etude* and *Polka Melancholique*; and

WHEREAS, from 1926 through 1928, she became Ballet Director of the Ravinia Opera, danced with Chicago Allied Arts for Marie-Queen of Romania, and was the first American guest ballet soloist with the Metropolitan Opera. Also, Ruth Page was the international ballerina invited to perform in honor of the coronation ceremonies of Emperor Hirohito in Tokyo, Japan. During this time, the great composers Prokofiev, Gershwin, and Stravinsky played for Ruth's rehearsals, and Louis Horst was her accompanist at the piano during her solo concerts in Havana, Cuba; and

WHEREAS, by 1932, Ruth became fascinated with the modern dance revolution and gave Isamu Noguchi his first dance costume commission resulting in the body-concealing sack costume she wore in *Expanding Universe*. In 1934, she provided Aaron Copland with his first ballet score commission for her courtroom ballet, *Hear Ye! Hear Ye!*

WHEREAS, one of her most famous ballets, *Frankie and Johnny*, premiered in 1938 and has been revived numerous times. She founded the touring company Chicago Opera Ballet in 1956. Six years later Rudolph Nureyev made his United States debut in New York with the troupe. In 1965, she created a large scale production of *The Nutcracker*, which was an annual event during the holiday season in Chicago until the mid 1980s; and

WHEREAS, Ruth retired from choreography in the early 1970's, having choreographed over 100 diverse works in a variety of genres; and

WHEREAS, in 1971 she purchased a building at 1016 N. Dearborn Street in Chicago, a former Moose Lodge, and transformed it in a performing arts center with dance studios, offices

and a theater. The Ruth Page Foundation, now known as The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, is home to the highly respected Ruth Page School of Dance, as well as a number of vital initiatives including the Ruth Page Artist In-Residence and Subsidized Theater Rental programs, an incubator for dance artists and small to medium size dance and theater organizations. The Center also sponsors The Ruth Page Dance Series at Northeastern Illinois University, The Ruth Page Festival of Dance at Ravinia and the annual Ruth Page Award; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Page also was a successful author. She published *Page by Page* in 1980, a series of essays about the development of dance in the 20th Century and her career. Four years later she authored *Class*, a look at dance classes throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Her creations were performed on Broadway and throughout the world. Several were made into television productions and her pieces were even performed on the "Ed Sullivan Show." She was the subject of several documentaries, including: *Ruth Page: An American Original* and *Ruth Page: Once Upon a Dancer*; and

WHEREAS, Ruth received the Dance Magazine Award in 1980 and the Illinois Gubernatorial Award in 1985. She was awarded honorary degrees by Indiana University, DePaul University and Columbia College of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Page died on April 7, 1991. She is buried in Graceland Cemetery in Wrigleyville; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Page was recently included by artist Kerry James Marshall for his mural "RUSH MORE" on the west façade of the Cultural Center as an homage to women who have shaped arts and culture in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, The Ruth Page Center for the Arts has recently undergone extensive exterior and interior renovations. The Center is hosting a performance by its six Artists In-Residence on March 22, 2018 to commemorate Ruth Page's birthday; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this twenty-eighth day of February, 2018, do hereby honor Ruth Page for her unique contributions to dance and culture.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Ruth Page Center for the Arts is congratulated for its ongoing contributions to the arts and its upcoming celebration of Ruth Page's birthday on March 22, 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be prepared and presented to The Ruth Page Center for the Arts.



BRIAN HOPKINS
Alderman, 2nd Ward