



Office of the City Clerk

City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St.
Room 107
Chicago, IL 60602
www.chicityclerk.com

Legislation Text

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SALUTE TO RICH KOZ

WHEREAS, September 18, 2014 marks the 44th Anniversary of "Svengoolie" a uniquely Chicago cultural icon who is brought to life by the czar of the low-budget horror show TV venue, Rich Koz; and

WHEREAS, A comic mash-up of "ghoul", those ever popular zombie-like creatures, with "Svengali", a fictional character from an 1895 novel that has come to refer to a muse with evil intent who dominates, manipulates and controls the wills of the weak, Rich Koz as "Svengoolie" along with his fictional cohorts have dominated this esoteric and campy genre on and off the television airwaves for more than four decades; and

WHEREAS, Originally portrayed by the late local TV and radio personality, Jerry G. Bishop, Rich Koz has been Svengoolie since 1979. The show airs low-budget, horror and science-fiction movies with Koz performing sketches, telling corny jokes, and performing song parodies that spoofed the film being aired just before and after commercial breaks as well as occasionally interjecting humorous comments as the film was being shown; and

WHEREAS, Rich Koz started out as a fan who sent in sketch ideas from time to time and eventually ended up as Bishop's collaborator. The original show lasted from 1970 to 1973. When an opportunity arose, Koz five years later, he and Bishop decided to resurrect the Svengoolie franchise. "Son of Svengoolie" arose from the dead on June 16, 1979 with Koz now appearing as the main character in thick black makeup around his eyes, with a moustache, goatee and fright wig, wearing a top hat and tuxedo jacket over a bright red open-collared button-down shirt; and

WHEREAS, Rich Koz created new characters who were periodically included in the Svengoolie show. Pianist "Doug Graves" was played by musician and crew member Doug Scharf. However, "Zallman T. Tombstone", a disembodied skull, "Kerwyn", a wise-cracking rubber chicken, and "Durwood the Dummy", a ventriloquist's doll from the original 1970 show as well as many other incidental characters are all voiced by Koz; and

WHEREAS, This second iteration with Rich Koz as Svengoolie lasted for six years with "Son of Svengoolie" sunsetting on January 25, 1986. In that six-year period, "Son of Svengoolie" won three Chicago Emmys. Koz continued television work in various capacities, primarily as the host of the award-winning "Fox Kids Club" and "The Koz Zone", both weekday afternoon children's shows, as well as appearing as an announcer on the Fox network's 1988 New Year's Eve broadcast; and

WHEREAS, Rich Koz brought Svengoolie back to life for a third time on the last day of 1994 and the show currently airs on the cable channels and television stations run by Weigel Broadcasting. For Svengoolie's 25th anniversary in 2004, the show was presented with the Silver Circle Award by the Chicago/Midwest Chapter of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for "outstanding contributions to Chicago television". After April 2, 2011, Svengoolie could be seen nationally on the Me-TV cable network; and

WHEREAS, Aside from his adventures as Svengoolie, Rich Koz has developed a syndicated show, "Stooge-a-Palooza", sharing his life-long obsession about the "Three Stooges" comedy trio with an entirely new generations of fans; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Robert W. Fioretti, Alderman of the 2nd Ward, has apprised this august body of the significant milestone this Chicago celebrity has achieved; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED That we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, gathered together this 30th Day of July, 2014 AD, do hereby salute the more than four decades of ghoulish foolishness Rich Koz has brought to several generations of Chicagoans, extend our very best wishes for continuing success in whatever he wishes to "undertake" in the future and declare October 31, 2014 (Halloween) to be "Rich 'Svengoolie' Koz Day" throughout Chicago.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That a suitable copy of this resolution be prepared and presented to Rich Koz.