



Legislation Text

File #: RES 18-1362, **Version:** 1

Declaring August 22, 2018, Holly Monnett Day in Saint Paul.

WHEREAS, 1415 University Avenue West was originally opened as the fine dining restaurant Tip Top Tap in 1941, became the Town House in 1949, and was rebranded in 1969 by then-owner Emmett Jewell as Saint Paul's first gay bar; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1970s, the drinking age being 18, a softball player with the well-known slow-pitch team, Avantis, named Hollis (Holly) Monnett began frequenting the Town House; and

WHEREAS, on August 1, 1974, after being laid off from her day-job at a factory, Holly began working at the Town House; starting as a dishwasher and quickly being promoted to bar back and then bartender, requiring her to give up her softball career; and

WHEREAS, after serving as the manager for seven years, Holly bought the Town House on August 1, 1987; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Holly and her friend Steven Anderson, a reputable DJ and scholar, successfully rebranded the Town House as a gay country western bar named "Town House Country", complete with line dancing and two-step lessons, DJs, and a piano lounge in the back room; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, the Town House merged staff and clientele with popular gay bar Over the Rainbow/Foxy's on West 7th when the Over the Rainbow lease was not renewed, branding the merged spot, the Town House Bar, a dive bar focused on entertainment such as karaoke and drag shows; and

WHEREAS, during the construction on the light rail, where the street was closed on and off for two years, Holly pinched pennies and the bar lived off a dedicated reserve account she had created when she first learned about the train; and

WHEREAS, Holly and the staff of the Town House have created an inclusive, stable establishment where there is truly a sense of family; and

WHEREAS, the Town House's entertainment programming not only serves up fun, but often gives back to important causes, like weekly bingo that benefits the Aliveness Project, an organization that supports people living with HIV/AIDS, or regular fundraisers for The Retrievers, a volunteer lost dog rescue group, or events like the "Chest Away Cabaret" which raises money to help individuals get top surgery; and

WHEREAS, the Town House, Saint Paul's oldest LGBT bar, has served customers 365 days a year for decades, meaning a seven-day work week for Holly; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, Holly connected with a local buyer who is dedicated to keeping the Town House building and personality when he rebrands the bar; and

WHEREAS, the property sale is expected to go through August 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council wishes Holly Monnett an abundance of joy and rest in her retirement, where she plans to spend time biking, jogging, traveling and hanging out with her beloved chihuahua, Willy; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul City Council acknowledges the incredible work Holly has done to create a welcoming, entertaining, vibrant community bar and hangout and officially declares August 22, 2018 Holly Monnett Day in Saint Paul.