



City of Pittsburgh

510 City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Text File

Introduced: 11/10/2011

Bill No: 2011-2284, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, “Szopka” is the traditional Polish folk art tradition of creating whimsical and ornate architectural constructions of wood, cardboard, ribbon and foil paper; and

WHEREAS, the Szopka tradition originated in Southern Poland in the 16th Century and was brought to the United States by Polish and Slavic immigrants during the industrial migrations of the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, Szopka was widely practiced in the United States by Polish immigrants from the Cracow region until World War II; and

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh graphic designer and artist, David Motak, launched the Pittsburgh-based National Szopka Project as a historical and educational initiative in 2003; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Motak has since taught Szopka-making to over 800 adults and children across the country; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Motak has shown his Szopkas at prominent galleries, including the Gagosian Gallery in New York, the Frederick Meijer Gallery in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Krzysztofory Gallery in Cracow, Poland; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Motak has produced works for ethnic and arts organizations like the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, DC, the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester, NY, the Polish-American Heritage Association of Berks County, the Goggle Works Center for the Arts in Reading, PA, and the Pittsburgh Children's Museum; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, Mr. Motak created a traveling exhibit of the contributions of Poles to the history and cultural life of Western Pennsylvania and the United States called “Poles in Pittsburgh: Yesterday Today and Tomorrow” that has been shown across the country; and

WHEREAS, in December, 2010, Mr. Motak represented Pittsburgh at the annual Szopka Competition in the city of Cracow, Poland, where he became the first foreigner and first American to enter and earn the prestigious “Special Award for Artistic Merit” presented by the Cracow History Museum; and

WHEREAS, this year, the American Council for Polish Culture presented Mr. Motak with the organization's 2011 Cultural Achievement Award in recognition of his lifelong contributions to the promotion of Polish culture throughout the United States.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Pittsburgh City Council celebrates our region's rich Polish history and culture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council declares Thursday, November 10, 2011 to be David Motak Day in the City of Pittsburgh.