



City of Pittsburgh

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

Text File

Introduced: 9/15/2015

Bill No: 2015-2002, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, Evan Wolfson is a Pittsburgh native and Allderdice High School graduate; son of Jerry and Joan Colter Wolfson, and brother to Alison Wolfson and David Wolfson. Many locals may recognize the Wolfson name from the family's long-standing pediatric practice on Wilkins Avenue in Squirrel Hill, Bass Wolfson Pediatrics; and,

WHEREAS, in 1983, before almost anyone in the gay community was even beginning to think about fighting for same sex marriage, Evan wrote his Harvard Law School thesis on the freedom to marry; and,

WHEREAS, from 1989 until 2001, Evan worked at the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, directing their Marriage Project and coordinating the National Freedom to Marry Coalition, the forerunner to Freedom to Marry. Evan worked on the Vermont Supreme Court case that led to the creation of civil unions in Vermont, and called the unions a "wonderful step forward," but not enough; and,

WHEREAS, in April of 2000, Evan argued in front of the Supreme Court in the landmark case *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, in which the Court ruled that the Boy Scouts organization had the right to expel Dale for revealing that he was gay. Evan was not deterred; and,

WHEREAS, a year later, in April of 2001, Wolfson formed Freedom to Marry. His vision for the new organization was not just to change the law, but to change society. Evan said at the time, "I want gay kids to grow up believing that they can get married, that they can join the Scouts, that they can choose the life they want to live;" and,

WHEREAS, in 2003 Time Magazine described Evan as symbolic of the gay rights movement. In his book *Why Marriage Matters*, Evan calls marriage "a relationship of emotional and financial interdependence between two people who make a public commitment." In 2004, Time included Evan on its list of the "100 most influential people in the world." In 2012, Evan received the Barnard Medal of Distinction alongside President Barack Obama; and,

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2015, more than 20 years after Evan Wolfson began the same-sex marriage movement, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that freedom to marry legal for all Americans, regardless of sexual orientation; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby recognize and commend Evan Wolfson for launching the global movement for the freedom to marry, and for dedicating his entire career to the idea that everyone deserves the same basic fundamental rights and protections under the law, and should be able to celebrate their love as equal members in all aspects of society.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare September 15, 2015 to be “Evan Wolfson Day” in the City of Pittsburgh.