

In Memoriam



Bob Buckhorn, Mayor

WHEREAS, the City of Tampa takes pride in recognizing those individuals whose commitment and dedication have made a lasting impact on our community and its citizens. One of these individuals was **Thomas (Thom) F. Stork**, a well-respected and beloved marketing icon, community leader and environmentalist who passed away on Monday, January 2, 2017, at age 68; and

WHEREAS, born in Nebraska on April 6, 1948 to the late Warren and late Catherine Stork and raised in Savannah, Georgia, Mr. Stork attended St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School, excelling in swimming, and he earned his Bachelor's Degree from the University of North Carolina and was the school's radio Disc Jockey and enjoyed being a Cheerleader; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stork's stellar career in Tampa, Florida began in public relations with Taliferro Associates, and in 1974 he joined Busch Gardens Tampa Bay as its first Public Relations professional, and thereafter as a marketing executive that included Vice President of Marketing for Busch Gardens Tampa Bay and SeaWorld Orlando, and his nearly three decades with the Busch Entertainment Corporation played a key role in the organization's success; and

WHEREAS, The Florida Aquarium named Mr. Stork President and Chief Executive Officer in 2002, and his intellect, innovative leadership, natural kindness to people, and encouragement and support of staff reshaped the organization leading to a consistent and substantial increase in attendance and revenues while educating well-over a million children, and under his direction it became a world-class public aquarium and respected marine research facility; and


WHEREAS, Mr. Stork was dedicated to and defined The Florida Aquarium's mission to entertain, educate and inspire stewardship about our natural environment and he was steadfast in his commitment to its vision of protecting and restoring our blue planet, and among his many initiatives that elevated the facility and conservation included *Dive with the Sharks*, *Biologist for the Day*, *Explore a Shore*, *Stingray Beach*, *Carol J. and Barney Barnett Learning Center*, *Mosaic Center*, and he partnered with the Tampa Electric Company and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to create the *Center for Conservation*, and was dedicated to partnerships to protect marine life including with the National Aquarium in Cuba; and

WHEREAS, his vast contributions in the community included as Executive Board Member of the Tampa Convention Center, Visit Tampa Bay and the Tampa Downtown Partnership, on the Board of Governors of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, Committee Member for the City of Tampa Channelside Redevelopment Authority, Hillsborough County Hospitality, Travel & Tourism and for Tampa Bay Illustrated, Chair of the Marketing Committee of Visit Florida, he was appointed to the Florida Tourism Commission by both Governors Jeb Bush and Charlie Crist, was a member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and he was elected to "Who's Who" in American Colleges and Universities.

WHEREAS, known as a charismatic and wise man with a great sense of humor and constant smile who valued people, animals and the planet, true to his word and to his friends, and a mentor and inspiration to all who knew him, he will be forever remembered for his devotion and love of family, his kind and generous nature, and although we are grieved at the loss of this outstanding citizen, his legacy will continue to live on through the many improvements he brought to the environment, our community, and in all those whose lives he has touched.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Buckhorn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby urge all citizens to join me in publicly expressing sorrow and heartfelt appreciation to the Thomas F. Stork Family, his wife Donna, his son Christopher, daughter Ericka, grandchildren Tajai, Judah and Imani, and other family members, and to express our hopes that they will take solace in their many cherished memories and the impact of his life on our city and in the world in which we live.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 10th day of January, 2017.



Mayor

