

Proclamation



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. **Rabbi Richard J. Birnholz**, beloved Senior Rabbi of Congregation Schaarai Zedek in Tampa, Florida is one such person; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, Rabbi Birnholz was ordained in 1971, and began his almost five decades of religious service as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Israel in Memphis, Tennessee, and thereafter served as Rabbi of Beth Israel Congregation in Jackson, Mississippi and as a visiting professor in the Religion Department at Millsap College; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Birnholz and his family made Tampa, Florida their home in 1986 when he became Senior Rabbi of Congregation Schaarai Zedek (Gates of Righteousness), Tampa's first Synagogue founded in 1894, and under his leadership, it grew from a membership of 675 to 1,100 with an increase in young families, a full time cantor was added, and the Amy Gail Buchman Preschool was established, and he is greatly admired for his welcoming and warm nature and as a trusted advisor and spiritual guide, and Rabbi Birnholz has spent his tenure with Congregation Schaarai Zedek as an important part of the families he has led, seeing them through joy and sorrow, from childhood through marriage, births, milestones, and loss, and he is considered a friend and source of strength to so many; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Birnholz extends his leadership to the Tampa community through his contributions including organizing more than 500 volunteers to non-profit organizations on the annual Congregation Schaarai Zedek's Mitzvah Day, offering prayers at Tampa City Council meetings and installation ceremonies, teaching courses and serving as a guest lecturer at universities, and through his work at the Center for Catholic Studies at St. Leo College, Metropolitan Ministries, the Judeo-Christian Health Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, and much more; and

WHEREAS, throughout the years, Rabbi Birnholz has been deservedly recognized for his commitment to his faith, his congregation and the community including receiving an *Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity* from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the National Association of Jewish Educators' *Samuel Kaminker Memorial Curriculum Award*, United Jewish Appeal's *National Rabbinic Award*, the Tampa Bay Lightning's *Lightning Community Hero Award*, and the Judeo-Christian Health Clinic Board's *Good Samaritan Award*; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of Rabbi Birnholz retirement on June 30, 2018 after thirty-one years of spiritual leadership, his congregation and the community will honor him for his devoted service with a **Weekend Celebration** held April 27-29, 2018, featuring the theme *Yasher Koach...A Job Well Done!* and it includes a special Shabbat Service with guest speaker Rabbi Harry Danziger, a Stand-Up Comedy for a Stand Out Guy evening, and a Holy Smokes Family Barbeque Luncheon.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Buckhorn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby proclaim Friday, April 27, 2018 as

"RABBI RICHARD J. BIRNHOLZ DAY"

in the city of Tampa, Florida and urge all citizens to join me in thanking him for his many contributions and service to Congregation Schaarai Zedek and the citizens of our community, and in wishing him continued success, happiness, and God's blessings in his future.

Dated in Tampa, Florida this 27th day of April, 2018.

Bob Buckhorn

Mayor

