

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 **Dr. Dennis Frank “Tally” Pupello, M.D.**, a beloved and well-respected Family Physician, Heart Surgeon and Entertainer who passed away on Thursday, October 25, 2018 at age 79; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Pupello was born on May 31, 1939 to the late Frank and Grace Pupello in the West Tampa, Florida community, and as a child, he discovered his passion for music at age five when he began playing the piano, and he was a 1957 graduate of Jefferson High School; and

WHEREAS, playing the keyboard, Dr. Pupello founded The Fabulous Rockers while in high school, a nine member musically gifted and entertaining group that became an iconic Tampa band earning early success with choreographed performances, and their song “*Would I Still Be Loving You*” reached the regional Top 40 Chart and was played on the radio in Florida and nationally, they performed with well-known bands and personalities including The Four Seasons, Roy Orbison, Frankie Avalon, Neil Sedaka, Connie Francis, Fabian, Brenda Lee and Jerry Lee Lewis, and they performed in New York City, New York at the popular clubs including the famous Peppermint Lounge; and

WHEREAS, The Fabulous Rockers disbanded when Dr. Pupello fulfilled his dream of becoming a doctor, graduating from the University of Florida’s College of Medicine and completing his residency at Stanford University, and during his stellar medical career, he became a world-renown pioneer in cardiovascular surgery where he was a founding member of the cardiac surgery staff at Tampa General Hospital and served on the first heart transplant team in Tampa, he founded St. Joseph’s Heart Institute, publish numerous professional articles, and he performed over 25,000 surgeries prior to his retirement in 2005. Dr. Pupello was honored for his achievements numerous times including earning Vitals’ *Compassionate Doctor Recognition* and its *Patients’ Choice Award* four times, the Florida Society of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons’ *Lifetime Achievement Award*, he was rated as one of *America’s Top Surgeons*, featured in the Guinness Book Of World Records for being the surgeon for the oldest living heart valve recipient, and he was named an American College of Cardiology and American College of Chest Physicians Fellow; and

WHEREAS, a reunion show in 1994, with over 6,000 loyal fans attending, led to The Fabulous Rockers reuniting and playing in concerts and popular venues, and they fulfilled a band dream in 2016 by playing in Havana, Cuba, and most recently they performed on October 23, 2018 at the Mayor’s Hispanic Heritage Celebration at the historic Tampa Theatre, and *The Fabulous Rockers Forever* documentary was created in their honor; and

WHEREAS, an inspiration to all who knew him, and a man deeply committed to his profession, patients, community and friends, Dr. Pupello will be forever remembered for his devotion and love of his wife and family, his strong ethics, kindness, compassion, fun-loving spirit, and his mastery of diving, fishing and boating, and although we are grieved at the loss of this outstanding citizen, his legacy will continue to live on through the lives he has touched, through his music and especially those individuals he skillfully healed.

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 Dr. Dennis F. Pupello Family, his wife Lisa, sons Dennis, Frank, Brad, and Derek, daughters Angela, Ariel, Alana, and Alexa, Grandchildren, sisters, 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.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 29th day of October, 2018.



Bob Buckhorn

Mayor