



Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley, District 7
 2180 Milvia Street, 5th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704
 PHONE 510-981-7170, FAX 510-981-7177, EMAIL kworthington@ci.berkeley.ca.us

CONSENT CALENDAR
 May 6, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington
 Subject: Proclamation in Honor of Avotcja Jiltonilro

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a proclamation honoring Avotcja Jiltonilro with the Lifetime Achievement Award in Poetry.

BACKGROUND:

Avotcja Jiltonilro, a poet, playwright, photographer, and teacher, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award in Poetry at the 12th Annual Berkeley Poetry Festival at Berkeley City College on May 10th, 2014. Past award winners have included: Mary Rudge, Clive Matson, Adam David Miller, Joyce Jenkins, Maggie Meyes, Julia Vinograd, and Jack Foley.

Avotcja and her jazz group, Avotcja & Modupue, were inducted into the Bay Blues Society Hall of Fame Jazz Group in both 2005 and 2010. Her work reflects a lifetime of ongoing community activism and public educational enrichment.

Her website, Avotcja.org, details her newest book of poetry and short stories, *With Every Step I Take*, which includes beautiful artwork by Eliza Shefler. San Francisco Poet Laureate Devorah Major praised Avotcja's poetic strength and realism: "I can almost hear the music playing and her strong voice calling out the sweetness and sadness and realness of the times."

For years, Avotcja has been broadcasting weekly on KPFA 94.1 FM Berkeley in her radio show—*Bebop, Cubop and The Musical Truth*. She teaches creative writing, storytelling, and drama in public schools. Thanks to the California Arts Council, she was also an Artist in Residence at the Milestones Project and San Francisco Penal System. Avotcja is a proud member of DAMO (Disability Advocates of Minorities Organization), PEN Oakland, California Poets in the Schools, IWWG (International Women's Writing Guild), and is an ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) recording artist.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Kriss Worthington 981-7170.

Attachment:

1. Proclamation Honoring Avotcja Jiltonilro

In Honor of Avotcja Jiltonilro

- WHEREAS,** Avotcja has been a resident of the East Bay for over forty years and an exceptional and inspirational figure in writing, music and educational communities that serve the East Bay in the capacities of poet, musician, playwright, teacher, radio host, and community organizer;
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja's poetry has been published in English and Spanish in the United States, Mexico and Europe, including her poetry collection *With Every Step I Take*, published by Taurean Horn Press in 2013, and in anthologies, journals and other publications like *Journal of Pan African Studies*, *El Tecalote*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *Black Culture Magazine*, *The Caribbean*, *Que Odee Sola*, *Street Spirit*, *Out of Our*, *Poets Respond to SB1070*, *Sparing with Beatnik Ghosts*, and many more;
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja has been a leading innovator in seamlessly combining poetry and music, particularly with her band Avotcja and Modupue, which was twice named the Bay Blues Society Hall of Fame Jazz Group in 2005 and 2010 and has recorded a CD Live @ Yoshi's as well as appeared on other artists' recordings;
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja has opened for, appeared on stage or played with Betty Carter, Susana Baca, Gema y Pável, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Bobi and Luis Cespedes, John Handy, Sonido Afro Latina, Black Poets with Attitude, Bombarengue, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Piri Thomas, Janice Mirikitani, Diana di Prima, Michael Franti, Jayne Cortez and Jose Montoya's Royal Chicano Air Force as well as many others;
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja has composed, played music and poetry for theater, film, and dance including the Danish documentary *MuNu*, Dimensions Dance Theater, The Purple Moon Dance Project, New York's Dance Mobile, and has performed at numerous festivals, clubs and events worldwide;
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja continues a lifetime of teaching creative writing, storytelling and drama in public schools, and thanks to the California Arts Council she was also an Artist in Residence at the Milestones Project and in the penal system;
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja has organized numerous poetry and music events including the popular Berkeley series The Music of the Word / *La Palabra Musical*;
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja has been a popular Bay Area DJ and radio personality on KPOO in San Francisco and KPFA in Berkeley, and the founder/Director of "The Clean Scene Theater Project (AKA) Proyecto Teatral De La Escena Sobria";
- WHEREAS,** Avotcja has been a proud and active member of DAMO (Disability Advocates Of Minorities Organization), PEN Oakland, California Poets In The Schools, NARAS and The International Women's Writing Guild;
- WHEREAS,** On May 10, 2014, the 12th Annual Berkeley Poetry Festival will honor Avotcja with its Lifetime Achievement Award for the truly valuable creative and community work that she has accomplished.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Berkeley City Council recognize and proclaim

May 10th, 2014 As Avotcja Jiltonilro Day

Mayor Tom Bates

Councilmember Max Anderson

Councilmember Jesse Arreguin

Councilmember Laurie Capitelli

Councilmember Linda Maio

Councilmember Darryl Moore

Councilmember Susan Wengraf

Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Councilmember Gordon Wozniak