

1 [Kenneth Rexroth Day.]
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3 **Resolution declaring December 22, 2005 Kenneth Rexroth Day in San Francisco.**

4 Whereas, The poet Kenneth Rexroth became intimately associated with San Francisco
5 from the day of his arrival in this City at age 21 in summer 1927, and remains to this day
6 intricately bound up with the cultural life and history of San Francisco in the minds of
7 generations of contemporaries and successors; and
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9 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth, as poet and mentor to countless poets, occupied the
10 unusual position of a celebrated major American poet and writer working outside the centers
11 of official United States culture, choosing to live and write in this City that was widely regarded
12 as a provincial outpost on the far West Coast, and furthermore choosing to forge a distinctive
13 career as poet, artist, literary translator, essayist, critic, and cultural historian, outside the
14 approval system of traditional academia; and

15 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth insisted on a living, interdependent interaction among the
16 creative arts in San Francisco, by his example through his distinctive work as a painter and
17 promoter of painters, as a pioneer of the live performance of poetry and jazz, as an advocate
18 for local theater from traditional Chinese and Noh plays to early performances of Brecht and
19 Beckett, as promoter, lover, and critic of chamber music, opera, and dance; and; and
20

21 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth brought to San Francisco a way of conceiving of the City as
22 an international community, through the unbounded breadth of his learning and inquiries, his
23 translations of the world's poetry from Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, and
24 Japanese, and his embracing the full sweep of San Francisco's extremely various ethnic
25 communities, recognizing in our regional distinctiveness a reality that exceeded the provincial

1 conception of both the East Coast Establishment and this City's more narrowly focused official
2 town criers; and

3 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth consistently saw political engagement as a necessity for
4 the creative artist and individual citizen, exemplified by his participation in the General Strike
5 of 1934, his long-term involvement with a wide variety of Anarchist and Pacifist groups in San
6 Francisco, his intense engagement in the direction taken by artists involved locally in the
7 Works Project Administration during the Great Depression, his direct aid to Japanese
8 American families displaced during the forced relocations of World War II, his personal stance
9 as a Conscientious Objector and counsel to COs and war resisters from World War II to the
10 war in Viet Nam, and his many social-political writings, including a history of Communalism;
11 and

12 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth worked as a highly influential teacher through a variety of
13 modes, conducting classes in art history at the San Francisco Art Institute, teaching at San
14 Francisco's International Repertory Theater, heading open-ended courses in creative studies
15 at San Francisco State University, authoring the City column aimed at general readers,
16 grocery clerks and cab drivers, three times weekly for the former San Francisco Examiner,
17 reviewing the world's literature regularly for the Saturday Review in his "Classics Revisited"
18 essays, and broadcasting weekly for 20 years over local Pacifica radio's KPFA-FM, of which
19 he was a co-founder; and

20 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth became instrumental to the burgeoning of the
21 internationally renowned San Francisco Renaissance in poetry during the 1950s, contributed
22 to the founding of the Poetry Center at San Francisco State University, and acted as guide,
23 mentor, and Master of Ceremonies to the Beat movement, and simultaneously as that
24
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1 movement's harshest, most engaged critic (when crowned by national media as "The
2 swinging big daddy of the Beat Generation," he replied "An entomologist is not a bug!"); and

3 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth became internationally regarded as an originator of the
4 contemporary ecology movement, through his work as amateur naturalist, his eloquent
5 address in his poems and other writings to a beloved natural world, readily at hand whether in
6 city or wilderness, his decades of hiking and mountaineering in the local coastal range, and
7 the high Sierras; and

8 Whereas, Kenneth Rexroth throughout his life engaged in a spiritual pursuit embracing
9 paths as distinctive as Zen Buddhism and Roman Catholicism, recognizing the moral role of
10 the creative individual, of whatever persuasion, deeply rooted in what he termed "reverence
11 for life"; therefore

12 Resolved, that on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth, the San Francisco
13 Board of Supervisors declares December 22, 2005 Kenneth Rexroth Day in San Francisco.

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City and County of San Francisco

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Tails
Resolution

File Number: 052015

Date Passed:

Resolution declaring December 22, 2005 Kenneth Rexroth Day in San Francisco.

December 13, 2005 Board of Supervisors — ADOPTED

Ayes: 10 - Alioto-Pier, Ammiano, Dufty, Elsbernd, Ma, Maxwell, McGoldrick,
Mirkarimi, Peskin, Sandoval
Absent: 1 - Daly

File No. 052015

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on December 13, 2005 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

DEC 16 2005

Date Approved

Gloria L. Young
Clerk of the Board

Mayor Gavin Newsom