

# PROCLAMATION

## RECOGNIZING SANDRA AND DAVID SOKOL AS THE 2026 RECIPIENTS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST'S "HEART OF OUR VILLAGES" AWARD MARCH 12, 2026

**WHEREAS**, we are here today to express our appreciation to Sandra and David Sokol, and to honor them as 2026 recipients of the "Heart of Our Villages" award presented by The Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest in recognition of their contributions of time, talent, and skills in support of multiple community activities; and

**WHEREAS**, Sandra and David Sokol have been residents of Oak Park since 1972 and have shown their commitment to the community through their involvement in multiple organizations, beginning as founding members of the Hawthorne Community Council and continuing through PADS, OPALGA, Beyond Hunger, the Oak Park Temple, and the Nineteenth Century Charitable Association, as well as participating on numerous volunteer commissions and in village government for more than 50 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Sandra Sokol started working at Oak Park Village Hall in March 1985 as a Community Relations Representative in the Community Relations Department, earning recognition as "Village Employee of the Year," and displaying her commitment to a racially diverse community by helping to organize the Oak Park Exchange Congress, which brought together leaders from communities nationwide to work on racial integration; and

**WHEREAS**, Sandra Sokol was elected village clerk in April 1993, and re-elected for three more terms, bringing her total service in village government to 24 years, setting an example of service and dedication and earning a Citizen's Commendation from the Oak Park Police Department for always "going the extra mile" and a Community Service Award from the Park District of Oak Park for the instrumental role she played in documenting and researching the Village's Comprehensive Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, during her tenure as village clerk, Sandra Sokol also served as president of the North-Northwest Municipal Clerks Association oversaw the transition to the digital age, introduced a program to host first-time juvenile offenders while they performed community service work and instituted Oak Park's domestic partner registry; and

**WHEREAS**, even in retirement, she has continued to participate in several community organizations, serving as a founding member of Arbor West Neighbors, a member of the Rush Oak Park Hospital Board and a member of the Illinois State's Attorney's Steering Committee of the Community Justice Center; and

**WHEREAS**, David Sokol has applied his knowledge of art and architecture not only as a professor and as chairman of the art history department at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus but also as a longtime member and board member of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation and as vice president of the Unity Temple Restoration Foundation; and

**WHEREAS**, David Sokol was elected to the Oak Park Village Board in 1977, and later to the board of the Oak Park Public Library, and has followed that service with almost continuous participation in village government as a volunteer, with sixteen years on the Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission, including nine years as chair, and as chairman of the Public Art Commission and a member of the Oak Park Plan Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, David Sokol has authored numerous scholarly articles, books, and biographies as well as three books on Oak Park—*Oak Park, Illinois: Continuity and Change*; *Oak Park: The Evolution of a Village*; and *The Noble Room: The Inspired Conception and Tumultuous Creation of Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple*—sharing his appreciation for his adopted home town with the wider world; and

**WHEREAS**, David Sokol has also served on numerous boards that benefit the entire state of Illinois, including the Historic Sites Advisory Council, the Board of the Illinois State Museum, and currently as a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission.

**NOW THEREFORE**, on behalf of the Village of Oak Park, we express our sincere appreciation to Sandra and David Sokol for their many years of service to our community, the example they have set for activism, volunteerism, and philanthropy, and congratulate them on their selection by The Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest as one of the 2026 recipients of the "Heart of Our Villages" award.

**AND FURTHER**, I, Vicki Scaman, President of the Village of Oak Park and the Board of Trustees, do hereby proclaim Thursday, March 12, 2026, as **HEART OF OUR VILLAGES DAY** in the Village of Oak Park in honor of Sandra and David Sokol, and urge all citizens to join me in supporting the efforts of The Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest in recognizing the individuals whose very lives exemplify the unique characteristics and spirit of our community.

**DATED** this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026.

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Vicki Scaman, Village President

**ATTEST**

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Christina M. Waters, Village Clerk