



# CITY OF SB PITTSBURGH

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

*By virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, I do hereby issue this proclamation honoring*

## *Proclamation*

**DR. ROBERT SMITHDAS**

*January 16, 2009*

***WHEREAS,** Dr. Robert Smithdas grew up in a large and loving family in the Overbrook section of Pittsburgh. At the very tender age of four, Dr. Smithdas lost both his sight and his hearing as the result of illness; and*

***WHEREAS,** Dr. Smithdas attended the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children and went on to the prestigious Perkins School for the Blind in Boston. Second only to Helen Keller, Dr. Smithdas received a Bachelors degree, and is the first deaf-blind to receive a Masters degree; and*

***WHEREAS,** today Dr. Robert Smithdas, still young in his eighties, retires as Director of Community Education at the Helen Keller National Center, a position he attained before the days of equal access and has held for more than 50 years. He remains a shining example of the capability of the disabled, named as the Handicapped American of the Year in 1965 by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped; and*

***WHEREAS,** among his many talents Dr. Smithdas is a poet. He was named Poet of the Year for 1960-61. He is a qualified Red Cross swimmer, a fisherman and remarkably adept at woodworking and cooking. He is a living example to the sighted and hearing, as well as the disabled; and*

***WHEREAS,** when asked, Barbara Walters named Dr. Smithdas as the most inspirational person she had ever interviewed. Dr. Smithdas is married to Michelle, also deaf-blind and although they have many sighted and hearing friends who visit they are unbelievably self-sufficient.*

***NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that I Luke Ravenstahl, as Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, wish to pay tribute to Dr. Robert Smithdas for his remarkable achievements and the inspirational legacy he leaves for those who aspire to follow in his footsteps. I do hereby declare January 16, 2009, "Dr. Robert Smithdas Day" here in our most livable City of Pittsburgh.*



**LUKE RAVENSTAHL**

*Mayor*