

**CITY OF LEAD**  
**PROCLAMATION**  
*Office of the Mayor*  
*Eleanor Herz Swent Day*  
*June 4, 2024*

**Whereas *Eleanor Herz*** was born June 4, 1924 in the back bedroom of her family’s home on Addie Street in Lead, South Dakota to Janet Herz Kimpston and Nathaniel Herz; Janet had a Bachelor’s Degree in geology from Iowa University in Fayetteville, Iowa; Nathaniel had a mining engineering degree from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut and became Chief Metallurgist at the Homestake Gold Mine; and

**Whereas** she enjoyed skiing at Terry Peak, attending concerts at the Lead Opera House, singing in the chorus of high school musical productions, honing her public speaking skills with the National Forensic League, and serving as president of South Dakota High School Press Association; and

**Whereas** she attended Lead public schools, graduating at age 16 from Lead High School (Class of 1940), where she was editor of the student newspaper; and

**Whereas** she attended Dana Hall School in Wellesley, Massachusetts for one year, where she was assigned to “corrective speech” class because she had a South Dakota accent, which was deemed too “harsh” and “Western” for Massachusetts; and

**Whereas** she attended Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, where she considered herself almost a foreign student, being from South Dakota, and befriended students from across the globe; and

**Whereas** she graduated from Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts in 1945 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa; and

**Whereas** she took flying lessons in her early 20’s; and

**Whereas** she earned a Master’s degree *cum laude* from Denver University in Denver, Colorado, in 1947, where her thesis was “Stories of a Western Mining Camp”; and

**Whereas** she came home from Denver for a visit and met a handsome young mining engineer named Langan Waterman Swent when her father invited Langan home for dinner; and

**Whereas** she spent a lot of time with Langan on the Lead golf course - even though neither cared much for golf - when they discovered that this was the only place in Lead where they could be alone for a proper courtship; and

**Whereas** she married Langan in Lead Methodist Church on June 22, 1947, and moved later that year to Tayoltita, Mexico, where Langan had grown up and now worked at San Luis silver mine; and

**Whereas** she fell in love with Mexican culture as she learned to speak Spanish, ride a mule, and cook on a wood stove; and

**Whereas** she had three children - Jay Kimpston Swent, Christine Waterman Swent, and Richard Langan Swent - and many adventures before leaving Mexico in 1954; and

**Whereas** she moved back to Lead in 1954 when Langan became assistant to the manager of Homestake mine, sponsored Mexican high school students to attend Lead High School, lived in the "Glover House," formed a bridge club with neighbors, and was active with PEO; and

**Whereas** she moved to Grants, New Mexico in 1957 when Langan was named manager of Homestake's uranium mining in the state; and

**Whereas** she had a fourth child, Jeannette Frazier Swent, was welcomed by Pueblo Indians (including famous potter Lucy Lewis), and became active in local, state, and national politics; and

**Whereas** she moved in 1966 to Piedmont, California when Langan was named Homestake's Executive Vice President of Uranium Operations and Clay Products, later becoming Vice President of Engineering and Environmental Affairs; and

**Whereas** she obtained a teaching credential and taught English as a Second Language in Chinatown in Oakland, California from 1967 until 1986, when she began a new career as an oral historian; and

**Whereas** she worked at the Regional Oral History Office (now the Oral History Center) at UC Berkeley as a Senior Research Interviewer / Editor until 2005 and was director of the "Western Mining in the Twentieth Century" series of oral histories; and

**Whereas** she traveled all over the world and still maintained her ties to Lead, returning for many high school reunions and vacations, and promoting South Dakota and the Black Hills to all who would listen; and

**Whereas** she wrote prolifically for local newspapers, regional magazines, and historical and literary journals, including writing "The Double Tree," a short story that was published in 1948 and selected as a "Distinctive Short Story" in *The Best American Short Stories 1948* anthology; and

**Whereas** she wrote three non-fiction books:

- *Asian Refugees in America, Narratives of Escape and Adaptation* (2011);
- *One Shot for Gold, Developing a Modern Mine in Northern California* (2021); and
- *Landing Uphill, Seven Years at San Luis* (2024); and

**Whereas** she received the Clark Spence award from the Mining History Association for the best book on mining history in 2021-22; and

**Whereas** she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters degree in 1998 from South Dakota School of Mines & Technology; and

**Whereas** she served as president of the Mining History Association and won the Rodman Paul Award for contributions to mining history; and

**Whereas** she moved in 2005 to Palo Alto, California, where she keeps in touch with developments in Lead and proudly proclaims her South Dakota roots; and

**Whereas** she plans to celebrate her 100th birthday surrounded by family and reminiscing about Lead and the Black Hills on June 4, 2024;

***Now, therefore, I, Ronald Everett, Mayor of the City of Lead,  
Proclaim June 4, 2024, as***

***ELEANOR HERZ SWENT DAY IN THE CITY OF LEAD,***

and I join with her many relatives and friends in  
congratulating her on her many accomplishments both in Lead and beyond,  
thanking her for always being a champion of Lead and South Dakota,  
and wishing her great happiness on her birthday and every day.

IN WITNESS, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the  
Great Seal of the City of Lead, this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of June 2024.