

1 Introduced by Council Member Johnson:
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4 **RESOLUTION 2026-413**

5 A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE SISTERS
6 OF ST. JOSEPH OF ST. AUGUSTINE FOR MORE THAN A
7 CENTURY OF SERVICE TO THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE,
8 RECOGNIZING THEIR COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP IN
9 EXPANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION DURING AN ERA OF
10 PROFOUND INEQUITY AND THEIR ENDURING LEGACY IN
11 THE LIVES THEY TRANSFORMED; PROVIDING AN
12 EFFECTIVE DATE.
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14 **WHEREAS**, in 1650, in Le Puy-en-Velay, France, the Sisters of St.
15 Joseph were founded upon a bold and unifying vision to serve "the
16 dear neighbor" without distinction, a vision that would later travel
17 across oceans and generations; and

18 **WHEREAS**, on September 2, 1866, in the fragile aftermath of the
19 Civil War, eight Sisters arrived at Picolata Landing along the St.
20 Johns River, stepping into a South defined by reconstruction,
21 resistance, and the urgent need for education among newly freed
22 African Americans; and

23 **WHEREAS**, at a time when the education of formerly enslaved people
24 was not widely supported and, in many instances, actively discouraged,
25 the Sisters of St. Joseph embraced a higher calling, recognizing
26 education not as a privilege to be rationed, but as a right to be
27 realized; and

28 **WHEREAS**, with quiet resolve and unyielding purpose, the Sisters
29 established schools, catechetical missions, and centers of learning
30 throughout Jacksonville, including Holy Rosary, St. Pius V, St.
31 Paul's, Assumption, Bishop Kenny High School, Christ the King School,

1 and numerous outreach initiatives, creating spaces where minds could
2 be formed and futures could be imagined; and

3 **WHEREAS**, their work represented more than instruction, it was
4 an act of transformation, offering dignity through literacy,
5 empowerment through knowledge, and opportunity through access,
6 particularly for communities that had been systematically denied all
7 three; and

8 **WHEREAS**, in advancing education during an era marked by
9 segregation and social division, the Sisters challenged the
10 prevailing norms of their time, not through confrontation alone, but
11 through consistent, courageous action that redefined what service
12 could look like in a divided society; and

13 **WHEREAS**, beyond the classroom, the Sisters extended their
14 mission into the broader community, establishing homes, caring for
15 the sick, supporting the elderly, and responding to epidemics and
16 hardship with compassion rooted in both faith and action; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the Sisters' presence in Jacksonville helped construct
18 an enduring educational and moral framework that continues to
19 influence the city's trajectory, with generations of residents
20 tracing their opportunity, growth, and success, back to institutions
21 founded or shaped by the Sisters; and

22 **WHEREAS**, after more than one hundred years of faithful and
23 transformative service, the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine
24 are now transitioning away from active daily ministry in Jacksonville,
25 a reflection of changing vocations and times, yet not a reflection
26 of diminished impact; and

27 **WHEREAS**, the Sisters' legacy remains firmly rooted in the lives
28 they uplifted, the barriers they helped dismantle, and the belief
29 they carried forward: that education is both a tool of empowerment
30 and an expression of human dignity; now therefore

31 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

1 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors and commends the
2 Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine for more than a century of
3 extraordinary service, recognizing their unwavering commitment to
4 education, equity, and community uplift. The City Council
5 acknowledges the Sisters' historic role in advancing educational
6 opportunities for African Americans and other underserved populations
7 during a period when such efforts required both courage and
8 conviction. The City Council expresses its profound gratitude for the
9 Sisters' enduring contributions, affirming that their work did not
10 simply educate, it empowered, it elevated, and it expanded what was
11 possible for generations. The City Council declares that while the
12 Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine may be transitioning from
13 daily operations, their legacy does not fade, it lives in every
14 classroom once filled, every barrier once challenged, and every life
15 that now stands taller because they chose to teach, to serve, and to
16 believe.

17 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
18 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
19 without the Mayor's signature.

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21 Form Approved:

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23 /s/ Shannon MacGillis

24 Office of General Counsel

25 Legislation Prepared By: Colleen Hampsey, City Council Research

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