

1 Introduced by Council Member Priestly Jackson and Co-Sponsored by
2 Council Members White, Salem, Carlucci, Carrico, Bowman, Morgan,
3 Ferraro, Pittman, Becton, Howland, Diamond, Dennis, Newby, Freeman,
4 DeFoor, Gaffney, Cumber, and Boylan and amended on the Floor of
5 Council:

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8 **RESOLUTION 2022-429-A**

9 A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMEMORATING THE LIFE
10 AND NUMEROUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF SOLLIE MITCHELL;
11 REQUESTING EMERGENCY PASSAGE UPON INTRODUCTION;
12 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

13
14 **WHEREAS**, Sollie Mitchell, a native of Ocilla, Georgia, was born
15 in June of 1918, graduated from Stanton High School in Jacksonville
16 and attended the institution that later became Florida Memorial
17 College, then located in St. Augustine; and

18 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Mitchell was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army in
19 World War II and was a company clerk at Fort Benning, Georgia, and a
20 firearms instructor at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland before
21 seeing combat in the Pacific Theater in the Philippines and New Guinea
22 and serving as a clerk on the staff at the headquarters of General
23 Douglas McArthur. His military service ended with the rank of staff
24 sergeant after a tour in Japan as part of the U.S. occupying force
25 after the end of the war; and

26 **WHEREAS**, returning to the United States in late 1945, Sollie
27 Mitchell became a Pullman porter with the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad
28 and a member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters where he
29 renewed his family's long-time acquaintance with civil rights pioneer
30 A. Philip Randolph and became the Secretary of the Jacksonville
31 chapter of the union and a trusted assistant to Mr. Randolph. A

1 highlight of his career with the railroad came in 1963 when he was
2 the only Pullman porter serving on the Freedom Train that carried
3 passengers from Jacksonville to the famous March on Washington where
4 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I have a dream" speech;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Mitchell had a lifelong dedication to service and
7 education, and that exhibited itself most prominently in his decades
8 of membership and active participation in the Alpha Phi Alpha
9 Fraternity and Prince Hall Freemasonry. He was coronated a Sovereign
10 Grand Inspector General of the Southern Jurisdiction in 1993 and
11 attended nearly 40 United Supreme Council sessions. He was named an
12 Honorary Past Master of the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of
13 Florida, Sovereign Grand Commander Emeritus, and Honorary Past
14 Imperial Potentate, and the Prince Hall Lodge in downtown Jacksonville
15 was named the Sollie Mitchell Lodge #377 in his honor; and

16 **WHEREAS**, Sollie Mitchell married Mary Alva Barnett in 1951 and
17 was as devoted to her for 62 years before her passing as he was to
18 the Historic Mt. Zion AME Church where he worshiped for decades; and

19 **WHEREAS**, it was with deep sadness that the Council learned of
20 the recent passing of the legendary Sollie Mitchell at the age of
21 103; now therefore

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

23 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors and commemorates
24 the life and countless accomplishments of pioneering civil rights and
25 labor movement leader Sollie Mitchell and extends to his family,
26 friends, and many admirers the City's sincere condolences on his
27 passing. Mr. Mitchell was a legendary figure in Jacksonville and his
28 wealth of first-hand historical knowledge of some of the great events
29 in our nation's history and his dedication to the improvement of his
30 community will be greatly missed.

31 **Section 2. Requesting emergency passage upon introduction**

1 **pursuant to Council Rule 4.901.** Emergency passage upon
2 introduction of this Resolution is requested in order to commemorate
3 the passing of Mr. Mitchell in a timely manner.

4 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
5 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
6 without the Mayor's signature.

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8 Form Approved:

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11 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

12 Office of General Counsel

13 Legislation Prepared By: Jeff Clements, City Council Research

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