

1 Introduced by Council Member Pittman:  
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4 **RESOLUTION 2026-404**

5 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE HONORABLE HENRY LEE  
6 ADAMS, JR., FOR HIS DISTINGUISHED LEGAL CAREER,  
7 HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND LIFELONG  
8 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE;  
9 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.  
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11 **WHEREAS**, the Honorable Judge Henry Lee Adams, Jr., was born in  
12 Jacksonville, Florida, and raised in the historic Eastside community,  
13 where his early life and experiences helped shape his commitment to  
14 justice, service, and community; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Judge Adams, a proud graduate of Matthew Gilbert High  
16 School, earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science  
17 from Florida A&M University, received his Juris Doctor from Howard  
18 University School of Law in 1969, and married his high school  
19 sweetheart Elaine while on their lunch break at the Duval County  
20 Courthouse; and

21 **WHEREAS**, Judge Adams began his legal career serving the people  
22 of Jacksonville through the Duval County Legal Aid Association, as a  
23 Public Defender, and then in private practice, demonstrating a  
24 dedication to equal access to justice; and

25 **WHEREAS**, in October 1979, under the leadership of Governor Bob  
26 Graham, Judge Adams made history as the first African American judge  
27 appointed to the Fourth Judicial Circuit, marking a transformative  
28 moment in the judicial landscape of Northeast Florida; and

29 **WHEREAS**, Judge Adams continued to break barriers throughout his  
30 career, becoming the first African American attorney invited to  
31 integrate an all-white Jacksonville law firm, the first African

1 American judge in Florida to preside over a white-on-black homicide  
2 case, and ultimately the first African American appointed as a United  
3 States District Judge in Florida when nominated by President Bill  
4 Clinton in 1993; and

5 **WHEREAS**, as a United States District Judge for the Middle  
6 District of Florida, and later as Chief Judge, Judge Adams has  
7 exemplified fairness, integrity, and dedication to the rule of law,  
8 earning widespread respect across the legal profession and the broader  
9 community; and

10 **WHEREAS**, beyond the bench, Judge Adams has served as President  
11 of the D.W. Perkins Bar Association and has contributed his leadership  
12 to organizations such as Communities in Schools and the Jacksonville  
13 Public Education Fund, demonstrating his enduring commitment to  
14 education, mentorship, and community advancement; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Judge Adams' life and legacy represent perseverance,  
16 excellence, and the courage to break down barriers, opening doors for  
17 future generations of legal professionals and public servants in  
18 Jacksonville and across the nation; now therefore

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

20 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors the Honorable  
21 Judge Henry Lee Adams, Jr., for his trailblazing legal career. The  
22 City Council extends appreciation to Judge Adams for his decades of  
23 outstanding service on the bench, and for serving as an inspiration  
24 to future generations.

25 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become  
26 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective  
27 without the Mayor's signature.

1 Form Approved:

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3 /s/ Shannon MacGillis

4 Office of General Counsel

5 Legislation Prepared By: Colleen Hampsey, City Council Research

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