

1 Introduced by Council Member Amaro and Co-Sponsored by Council Member
2 Pittman:

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5 **RESOLUTION 2025-445-A**

6 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MOURNING THE
7 PASSING OF CANNIE LEE CODY, JR.; PROVIDING AN
8 EFFECTIVE DATE.
9

10 **WHEREAS,** Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., grew up in Jacksonville and at
11 the age of 18, he volunteered for service with the United States
12 Coast Guard; and

13 **WHEREAS,** after his service with the Coast Guard, Cody worked
14 towards his life-long dream of becoming a police officer; he graduated
15 as valedictorian from the Duval County Patrol Academy, served as a
16 highway patrolman for five years, then earned the rank of detective
17 sergeant at the Duval County Sheriff's Office; and

18 **WHEREAS,** in 1964, Sergeant Cody was the lead detective in the
19 racially motivated murder case of Johnnie Mae Chappell, a beloved
20 wife and mother to ten children and resident of the Pickettville
21 neighborhood, who was shot by someone in a passing car because of the
22 color of her skin; and

23 **WHEREAS,** while the case went unsolved for months, Sergeant
24 Cody persevered with the investigation despite extreme opposition
25 from his superiors and mishandled evidence, and he endured death
26 threats for being a law enforcement officer who wanted to be fair to
27 everyone; and

28 **WHEREAS,** Sergeant Cody located a suspect and arrested four men
29 who were charged with first degree murder, though the charges were
30 dropped against three of the men for a lack of evidence and only one
31 was eventually convicted of manslaughter, serving just three years

1 in prison; and

2 **WHEREAS,** Cody was demoted and then dismissed from the Duval
3 County Sheriff's Office, yet even after he lost his career in law
4 enforcement he endeavored to work for justice for Mrs. Chappell; and

5 **WHEREAS,** thirty-two years after the murder of Mrs. Chappell,
6 Cody attended a family reunion of the Chappel family, who had been
7 shattered and scattered after their mother's death; and

8 **WHEREAS,** Cody and Shelton Chappell, who was an infant when his
9 mother was killed, became allies in the search for truth and
10 vindication for the death of a woman Cody had never met and Shelton
11 did not remember since he was so young when she was murdered; and

12 **WHEREAS,** in 2010, Cody authored a book called "The 14th Denial:
13 A Civil Rights Memoir" which inspired the movie "Wanted Justice:
14 Johnnie Mae Chappell" to share this incredibly important story; and

15 **WHEREAS,** in 2020, Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., was honored by the
16 Department of Veterans Affairs in the United States House of
17 Representatives for his dedication to our country and the civil rights
18 Movement; and

19 **WHEREAS,** Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., passed away on May 21, 2025, in
20 Mississippi at the age of 90, after a lifetime of fighting for what
21 is right and serving others; now therefore

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

23 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors the life of
24 Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., and mourns his passing. Mr. Cody's commitment
25 to justice, equality and truth against all odds and in the face of
26 opposition, serves as an inspiration to our city now and will for
27 generations to follow.

28 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
29 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
30 without the Mayor's signature.
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Form Approved:

/s/ Shannon MacGillis

Office of General Counsel

Legislation Prepared By: Colleen Hampsey, City Council Research

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