

1 Introduced by Council Member Johnson and Co-Sponsored by Council
2 Members Amaro, Miller, Freeman and Howland:

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4
5 **RESOLUTION 2026-471-A**

6 A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING JSO OFFICER
7 AND BISHOP ANTONIO C. RICHARDSON, FOR HIS
8 EXTRAORDINARY COURAGE, COMPASSION, FAITH,
9 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP, AND LIFE-SAVING ACTIONS ON
10 THE DAMES POINT BRIDGE, AND RECOGNIZING HIS
11 OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF
12 JACKSONVILLE THROUGH BOTH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND
13 MINISTRY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
14

15 **WHEREAS**, on April 12, 2026, officers of the Jacksonville
16 Sheriff's Office responded to a critical incident on the Dames Point
17 Bridge involving an individual experiencing severe emotional distress
18 and threatening to jump from the bridge; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Officer Antonio Richardson responded to the scene with
20 extraordinary calmness, compassion, wisdom, and humanity,
21 understanding that the moment required not only law enforcement
22 presence, but genuine human connection, empathy, and hope; and

23 **WHEREAS**, through heartfelt conversation, encouragement, prayer,
24 and extraordinary emotional intelligence, Officer Richardson
25 established trust with the individual and ultimately persuaded the
26 individual to step away from danger, preventing a tragic loss of life
27 and demonstrating the very highest ideals of public service; and

28 **WHEREAS**, the intervention, captured on video and shared widely
29 across national and digital media platforms, brought significant
30 attention to the City of Jacksonville and served as a powerful and
31 moving example of compassion driven policing, mental health crisis

1 intervention, and the profound impact of leading with humanity during
2 moments of despair; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Officer Richardson's actions inspired people throughout
4 the nation and elevated Jacksonville as a city capable of producing
5 leaders who understand that strength is not measured solely by
6 authority, but also by empathy, grace, patience, and the willingness
7 to save a life when it matters most; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Officer Richardson's actions serve as a powerful
9 reminder that law enforcement officers are often called to stand not
10 only as protectors of public safety, but also as guardians of human
11 dignity, compassion, and restoration during moments of profound
12 crisis; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the City Council further recognizes that Office
14 Richardson's remarkable actions were not isolated but rather
15 reflective of a lifetime devoted to faith, leadership, service, and
16 uplifting humanity through both ministry and community engagement;
17 and

18 **WHEREAS**, known throughout Jacksonville and beyond as Bishop
19 Antonio C. Richardson, he serves as the visionary leader of New Life
20 Evangelistic Center and Word Connection Ministries International,
21 organizations headquartered in Jacksonville, that have impacted
22 countless lives through spiritual guidance, leadership development,
23 outreach, mentorship, and transformational ministry; and

24 **WHEREAS**, an earnest preacher since the age of sixteen, Bishop
25 Richardson has dedicated the majority of his life to the advancement
26 of faith, hope, healing, and empowerment, leading New Life
27 Evangelistic Center from humble beginnings in 1993 into a nationally
28 recognized, multi-dimensional ministry known for innovation,
29 outreach, and community impact; and

30 **WHEREAS**, under Bishop Richardson's leadership, New Life
31 Evangelistic Center was recognized among the Top 100 Churches in

1 America in Technology and Innovation by Church Business Magazine,
2 reflecting a ministry committed to both spiritual excellence and
3 forward-thinking engagement with the modern world; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Bishop Richardson is widely respected as a teacher,
5 scholar, mentor, and servant leader, whose ministry extends beyond
6 Jacksonville through conferences, broadcasts, evangelism initiatives,
7 and the oversight of ministries throughout the United States and
8 internationally, including Africa; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Bishop Richardson holds a Bachelor's degree in
10 Religious Education and a Master's degree in Theology from Liberty
11 University, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity from
12 St. Thomas Christian College, reflecting his lifelong commitment to
13 scholarship, spiritual formation, and servant leadership; and

14 **WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes that Jacksonville is
15 strengthened by leaders who are willing to serve both professionally
16 and personally, and that Officer and Bishop Antonio Richardson
17 exemplifies what it means to lead with courage, conviction, faith,
18 wisdom, and compassion; now therefore

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

20 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors and commends
21 Officer Antonio Richardson, also known as Bishop Antonio C.
22 Richardson, for his extraordinary heroism, compassion, faith-centered
23 leadership, and life-saving actions on the Dames Point Bridge, and
24 recognizes his enduring contributions to the spiritual, emotional,
25 and civic well-being of the Jacksonville community. The City Council
26 extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation to Officer and Bishop
27 Richardson for demonstrating the transformative power of service,
28 humanity, leadership, and hope, and for reminding our city and our
29 nation that even in moments of darkness, one compassionate voice can
30 help lead another person back toward the light.

31 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become

1 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
2 without the Mayor's signature.

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4 Form Approved:

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6 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

7 Office of General Counsel

8 Legislation Prepared By: Brandon Russell, City Council Research

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