

1 Introduced by Council Member Clark-Murray:  
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4 **RESOLUTION 2026-246**

5 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS  
6 OF BESSIE COLEMAN, THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN  
7 LICENSED PILOT, COMMEMORATING THE 100<sup>TH</sup>  
8 ANNIVERSARY OF HER DEATH, AND ACKNOWLEDGING MS.  
9 COLEMAN'S CONNECTION TO THE ALLENDALE COMMUNITY  
10 AND COUNCIL DISTRICT 9; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE  
11 DATE.  
12

13 **WHEREAS**, born January 26, 1892, in Texas, Bessie Coleman was one  
14 of thirteen children born to sharecroppers George and Susan Coleman  
15 who were of Native American and African American descent; and

16 **WHEREAS**, Bessie Coleman attended primary school in a segregated  
17 one-room schoolhouse and briefly attended Langston University in  
18 Oklahoma before moving to Chicago in 1915 to live with her brother,  
19 working as a manicurist on the South side of the city; and

20 **WHEREAS**, while in Chicago, Bessie Coleman heard adventurous  
21 tales from pilots returning from World War I and it sparked a desire  
22 in her to become a pilot herself, however at that time American flight  
23 schools did not admit either black or female students; and

24 **WHEREAS**, after learning that France did not have such  
25 prohibitions for student pilots, Bessie Coleman first learned French  
26 and then attended the Federation Aeronautique Internationale,  
27 becoming the first African American woman to earn a pilot's license  
28 in 1921; and

29 **WHEREAS**, Bessie Coleman returned to the United States with the  
30 dream to establish a flight school for African Americans; and

31 **WHEREAS**, she became involved with the air show circuit, working

1 for several years as a barnstorming pilot, performing daring maneuvers  
2 including loops, figure eights, and near-ground dips, only appearing  
3 at air exhibitions if the crowd was desegregated; and

4 **WHEREAS**, on April 30, 1926, over Paxon Field in Jacksonville,  
5 Florida, Bessie Coleman was practicing the day prior to an air show  
6 when a mechanical error caused the plane to spiral downward,  
7 tragically killing her mechanic, William Wills, and Ms. Coleman at  
8 the age of 34; now therefore

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

10 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors the life and  
11 contributions of Bessie Coleman, the first African American licensed  
12 aviator. Ms. Coleman was a trailblazer who let nothing stand in the  
13 way of her dreams and her legacy continues to serve as an inspiration.  
14 The Council further wishes to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of  
15 Ms. Coleman's death and to acknowledge her connection to the Allendale  
16 community and Council District 9.

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:

22  
23 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

24 Office of General Counsel

25 Legislation Prepared By: Colleen Hampsey, City Council Research

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