

1 Introduced by Council Members Salem, Freeman, and Gaffney & Co-
2 Sponsored by Council Members Becton, Bowman, Boylan, Carlucci,
3 Carrico, Cumber, DeFoor, Dennis, Diamond, Ferraro, Hazouri, Morgan,
4 Newby, Pittman, Priestly Jackson, and White and amended on the
5 Floor of Council:
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8 **RESOLUTION 2021-95-A**

9 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND
10 ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BASEBALL LEGEND AND
11 AMERICAN SPORTS HERO HENRY "HANK" LOUIS AARON
12 FOR LEADING JACKSONVILLE TO THE 1953 SOUTHERN
13 ATLANTIC LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE AND FOR
14 HELPING TO FURTHER INTEGRATE THE SPORT THAT HE
15 LOVED; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
16

17 **WHEREAS**, there are very few names throughout the history of
18 American sports that inspire thoughts of greatness and excellence
19 more than Henry "Hammerin' Hank" Aaron. The journey to greatness
20 began on February 5th, 1934 when Henry Louis Aaron was born to his
21 parents Herbert and Estella in Mobile, Alabama. Being one of eight
22 children in a poor family made it very difficult for young Henry to
23 get the bat, ball, and glove that he needed to play the game that
24 he loved and to emulate his boyhood hero, Jackie Robinson. Henry
25 found a way to play ball by hitting bottle caps with sticks and
26 making bats and balls from junk that he found on the street.
27 Despite this setback, by the time he was in high school, Henry was
28 playing semipro baseball for the Mobile Black Bears; and

29 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Aaron signed his first professional Major League
30 Baseball contract in 1952 with the Boston Braves. The next year,

1 Mr. Aaron traveled to Jacksonville, Florida to play for the Braves'
2 minor league team, The Jacksonville Braves. During the 1953 season
3 in Jacksonville, Mr. Aaron endured racial abuse and single-handedly
4 forced the fans to accept him, regardless of race, because of his
5 outstanding batting talent. He led the entire Southern Atlantic
6 League with a batting average of .362, and was among the league
7 leaders in many batting categories, including 115 runs scored, 208
8 hits, 36 doubles, 338 total bases, and 135 runs batted in. This
9 dominating performance helped propel Jacksonville to winning the
10 Southern Atlantic League Championship and earned Mr. Aaron the 1953
11 Southern Atlantic League's Most Valuable Player Award; and

12 **WHEREAS**, the following season in 1954 having been given the
13 nickname, Hank, Mr. Aaron made his Major League Baseball debut for
14 the Braves and started an incredible 23-year career that is rivaled
15 by few in the sport. On April 8th, 1974, Henry Aaron hit his 715th
16 home run which surpassed the record of 714 that was held by Babe
17 Ruth. He had received death threats leading up to his 715th home run
18 warning him not to surpass the great Babe Ruth. Despite the
19 harassment and doubt, Henry Aaron surpassed Babe Ruth's home run
20 record and helped to further integrate the sport that he loved.
21 Henry played 21 years of his career with the Braves organization in
22 the National League, 2 years with the Brewers in the American
23 League, and retired from playing baseball in 1976. Following his
24 illustrious playing career, Mr. Aaron returned to the Braves
25 organization as an executive; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Henry Aaron's baseball legacy is filled with
27 accolades, records, and awards, including being a 25-time All-Star,
28 a World Series Champion in 1957, the National League Most Valuable
29 Player in 1957, a 3-time Gold Glove Award Winner in 1958-1960, and
30 a 2-time National League Batting Champion in 1956 & 1959. He led
31 the National League 4 times in home runs in 1957, 1963, 1966, and

1 1967; led the National League 4 times in runs batted in (RBI) in
2 1957, 1960, 1963, and 1966. Mr. Aaron was inducted into the Major
3 League Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982 almost unanimously on his
4 first eligible ballot. In 2000, Henry Aaron was named to Major
5 League Baseball's All-Century Team. In 2001, he was awarded the
6 Presidential Citizens Medal by President Clinton, and in 2002 was
7 given the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bush. The City
8 of Jacksonville hopes to further honor Henry Aaron's memory by
9 proposing legislation to name the baseball field at the J. P. Small
10 Memorial Park Stadium as the Henry L. Aaron Field; now therefore

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

12 **Section 1.** The City of Jacksonville hereby honors the life
13 and accomplishments of baseball legend and American sports hero
14 Henry "Hank" Louis Aaron for leading Jacksonville to the 1953
15 Southern Atlantic League Championship Title and for helping to
16 further integrate the sport that he loved.

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/ Paige H. Johnston

24 Office of General Counsel

25 Legislation Prepared By: Anthony J. Baltiero, City Council Research

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