

1 Introduced by Council Members Salem, Freeman, and Gaffney:  
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4 **RESOLUTION 2021-95**

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

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

25 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Aaron signed his first professional Major League  
26 Baseball contract in 1952 with the Boston Braves. The next year, Mr.  
27 Aaron traveled to Jacksonville, Florida to play for the Braves' minor  
28 league team, The Jacksonville Braves. During the 1953 season in  
29 Jacksonville, Mr. Aaron endured racial abuse and single-handedly  
30 forced the fans to accept him, regardless of race, because of his  
31 outstanding batting talent. He led the entire Southern Atlantic League

1 with a batting average of .362, and was among the league leaders in  
2 many batting categories, including 115 runs scored, 208 hits, 36  
3 doubles, 338 total bases, and 135 runs batted in. This dominating  
4 performance helped propel Jacksonville to winning the Southern  
5 Atlantic League Championship and earned Mr. Aaron the 1953 Southern  
6 Atlantic League's Most Valuable Player Award; and

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

21       **WHEREAS**, Henry Aaron's baseball legacy is filled with accolades,  
22 records, and awards, including being a 25-time All-Star, a World  
23 Series Champion in 1957, the National League Most Valuable Player in  
24 1957, a 3-time Gold Glove Award Winner in 1958-1960, and a 2-time  
25 National League Batting Champion in 1956 & 1959. He led the National  
26 League 4 times in home runs in 1957, 1963, 1966, and 1967; led the  
27 National League 4 times in runs batted in (RBI) in 1957, 1960, 1963,  
28 and 1966. Mr. Aaron was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall  
29 of Fame in 1982 almost unanimously on his first eligible ballot. In  
30 2000, Henry Aaron was named to Major League Baseball's All-Century  
31 Team. In 2001, he was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by

1 President Clinton, and in 2002 was given the Presidential Medal of  
2 Freedom by President Bush. The City of Jacksonville hopes to further  
3 honor Henry Aaron's memory by proposing legislation to name the  
4 baseball field at the J. P. Small Memorial Park Stadium as the Henry  
5 L. Aaron Field; now therefore

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

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

12 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become  
13 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective  
14 without the Mayor's signature.

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16 Form Approved:

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18 /s/ Paige H. Johnston

19 Office of General Counsel

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

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