

1 Introduced by Council Member Freeman:
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4 **RESOLUTION 2026-641**

5 A RESOLUTION HONORING W.C. GENTRY AND EXPRESSING
6 THE GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION OF THE CITY
7 COUNCIL FOR HIS YEARS OF COMMITTED SERVICE TO
8 THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE, TO THE WELL-BEING AND
9 EDUCATION OF YOUTH AND TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF
10 RESIDENTS; REQUESTING EMERGENCY PASSAGE UPON
11 INTRODUCTION; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
12

13 **WHEREAS,** W.C. Gentry has faithfully served the City of
14 Jacksonville for decades as an accomplished attorney, former Duval
15 County School Board Chairman, and member of Jacksonville's many boards
16 and commissions, demonstrating immense dedication and commitment to
17 public service and the citizens of this City; and

18 **WHEREAS,** Mr. Gentry was instrumental in the original
19 Jacksonville Journey, launched in 2008, serving on its Steering
20 Committee, Oversight Committee, and Education, Truancy, Dropout, and
21 Literacy Subcommittee, which led to massive reductions in crime,
22 school suspensions, and student absenteeism through increased
23 prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation efforts; and

24 **WHEREAS,** built upon the success of the original Jacksonville
25 Journey, Jacksonville Journey Forward was established in 2024, and
26 Mr. Gentry again committed himself to the City as Chair of the Journey
27 Forward Board, dedicated to reducing violence, strengthening
28 neighborhoods, and enhancing overall quality of life for all
29 residents; and

30 **WHEREAS,** Mr. Gentry's service to Jacksonville extends beyond his
31 work with Jacksonville Journey and its newest iteration, having played

1 a key role in establishing the City's first Ethics Commission and
2 serving on numerous boards and commissions, including the Value
3 Adjustment Board, the Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction, the
4 Charter Revision Commission, and the Safety and Crime Reduction
5 Commission; and

6 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Gentry has used his legal skills to provide hundreds
7 of hours of pro bono services to the City, including as Special
8 Environmental Counsel to the Mayor and Special Assistant State
9 Attorney in 1987-88 to investigate Jacksonville's longstanding odor
10 problem that was a stigma to the City's reputation and detrimental
11 to the communities' health and welfare; submitted his findings to the
12 Duval County Grand Jury which issued a Presentment naming the culpable
13 companies; assisted the City Council in creating meaningful
14 regulations; and as a result of potential criminal and civil
15 liability, major remediations were made and the odor problem was
16 eliminated; and in 2005-2007, served as Special Counsel to the
17 President of the Florida Senate, Jim King, in successfully defending
18 a lawsuit by South Florida counties challenging the constitutionality
19 of legislation that provided millions of dollars in education funding
20 to Duval County, thereby providing fair and equitable funding to
21 Jacksonville's schools; and

22 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Gentry, having been a teacher and football coach
23 before embarking on an illustrious legal career, also served as a
24 Member and Chairman of the Duval County School Board, further
25 showcasing his deep commitment to the well-being and education of
26 Jacksonville's youth; and

27 **WHEREAS**, as Mr. Gentry steps down from his position as Chair of
28 the Jacksonville Journey Forward Board, the City Council honors his
29 legacy and his commitment to improving the lives of the residents of
30 Jacksonville, and expresses its gratitude for his decades of service,
31 the impact of which is immeasurable and enduring; now therefore

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

2 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors W.C. Gentry for
3 his years of service to the City of Jacksonville and to its citizens.
4 The City Council honors his legacy and commitment to the well-being
5 and education of Jacksonville's youth and to improving the lives of
6 the residents of Jacksonville. The City Council expresses its
7 gratitude and appreciation for Mr. Gentry's dedication to the City
8 of Jacksonville and its citizens.

9 **Section 2. Requesting Emergency Passage Upon Introduction**
10 **Pursuant to Council Rule 4.901.** Emergency passage upon introduction
11 of this legislation is requested. The nature of the emergency is to
12 timely present the resolution to W.C. Gentry on the night of August
13 25, 2026.

14 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
15 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
16 without the Mayor's signature.

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18 Form Approved:

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20 /S/ Shannon MacGillis

21 Office of General Counsel

22 Legislation Prepared By: Brandon Russell, City Council Research

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