

1 Introduced by Council Members Dennis, Wilson, Hazouri, Salem,  
2 Freeman, Morgan, Newby, Boylan, Pittman, Gaffney, Carlucci, Bowman  
3 and Co-Sponsored by Council Members Priestly Jackson, Becton and  
4 DeFoor:

5  
6 **RESOLUTION 2020-29**

7 A RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE 120<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
8 OF THE SONG "LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING" BY  
9 JACKSONVILLE NATIVES JAMES WELDON AND JOHN  
10 ROSAMOND JOHNSON; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE  
11

12 **WHEREAS**, in 1899, Jacksonville native James Weldon Johnson  
13 wrote the poem "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing". His brother, John  
14 Rosamond Johnson, set the poem to music for a celebration of  
15 President Abraham Lincoln's birthday; and

16 **WHEREAS**, it was first performed in public by a choir of 500  
17 schoolchildren on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1900 at the segregated Stanton  
18 School in Jacksonville, Florida where Mr. James Weldon Johnson was  
19 principal. Over the following decades, the song spread across the  
20 South and other parts of the country; and

21 **WHEREAS**, in 1919, it was adopted by the National Association  
22 for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as its official song.  
23 It has been sung in schools, graduation ceremonies, military  
24 assemblies, sporting events, and other civic meetings, often  
25 alongside the "Star Spangled Banner". The song became known as the  
26 "Black National Anthem" and is one of the most cherished songs of  
27 the African-American civil rights movement; and

28 **WHEREAS**, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" is truly an American  
29 hymn. It is a celebration of liberty, a remembrance of struggle,  
30 and a hopeful prayer for a better future that has special meaning  
31 for African-Americans and their history, but resonates with all

1 Americans. On February 12th, 2020 "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" will  
2 celebrate 120 years of being sung and performed by countless  
3 Americans; now therefore

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

5 **Section 1.** The City of Jacksonville hereby celebrates the  
6 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the song "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" by  
7 Jacksonville native James Weldon Johnson and his brother, John  
8 Rosamond Johnson. The City of Jacksonville pauses to commemorate  
9 the contributions that this song has made to the City of  
10 Jacksonville, the State of Florida and our Nation as a whole  
11 before, during, and following the Civil Rights Movement.

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.

15  
16 Form Approved:

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18 /s/ *Margaret M. Sidman*

19 Office of General Counsel

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

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