

1 Introduced by Council Member Morgan and Co-Sponsored by Council  
2 Members Boylan, Salem, Becton and Pittman:

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5 **RESOLUTION 2023-382-A**

6 A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING RITA REAGAN  
7 FOR HER OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND EFFORTS TO  
8 PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE THE NORMAN STUDIOS MOVIE  
9 PRODUCTION COMPLEX IN ARLINGTON; PROVIDING AN  
10 EFFECTIVE DATE.

11  
12 **WHEREAS,** Rita Reagan, a graduate of Eastern Kentucky  
13 University, the University of North Florida and the University of  
14 Florida, is a lifelong educator. She taught English for the U.S. Army  
15 at an adult education center in Germany for a year and taught in  
16 South Florida for several years before arriving in Jacksonville. Over  
17 the next 30 years, Ms. Regan served with the Duval County Schools in  
18 a wide variety of capacities from teaching to grant-writing to program  
19 development; and

20 **WHEREAS,** Ms. Reagan has also devoted decades of her time and  
21 energies to leading and supporting many community organizations. She  
22 is a founder and board member of Old Arlington Inc., a board member  
23 and archivist for the Springfield Improvement Association, a founder  
24 of the Springfield Heritage Museum and Education Center, a board  
25 member of The Bridge: A Full Service Youth Center; a board member for  
26 the Epilepsy Foundation, a member of the Hogan's Creek Greenway Park  
27 Task Force, and many others; and

28 **WHEREAS,** Rita Reagan has most recently devoted nearly two  
29 decades of intensive efforts to lead the charge to preserve and  
30 revitalize the Norman Film Studio complex on Arlington Road, one of  
31 the last remaining vestiges of Jacksonville's heritage as a preeminent

1 film production city in the early days of movie-making; and

2 **WHEREAS,** Richard E. Norman purchased the former Eagle Film  
3 City Studios on Arlington Road in 1920 and made silent films there  
4 for the next 8 years, primarily for Black audiences featuring all-  
5 Black casts portraying Black life and stories in positive ways.  
6 Norman Studio is the last "race film" studio known to remain intact  
7 in the country and is a reminder of the role Jacksonville played as  
8 the "Winter Film Capital of the World" from 1907 to the early 1920's  
9 before the movie industry moved to California; and

10 **WHEREAS,** Rita Reagan spearheaded the campaign to convince the  
11 City to purchase the Norman Studio property in 2003, and to reunify,  
12 restore and reopen the National Historic Landmark property as a museum  
13 and event center; and

14 **WHEREAS,** her concerted efforts and leadership over these many  
15 years have paid off and, with a combination of City appropriations  
16 and grant funding, the initial phase of the Norman Studio complex  
17 restoration is nearing completion and will soon open for the public's  
18 education and enjoyment; now therefore

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

20 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors and commends Rita  
21 Reagan for her decades of tireless efforts to preserve and revitalize  
22 the historically significant Norman Studios silent film production  
23 complex on Arlington Road as a reminder of Jacksonville's prominence  
24 in the history of movie making. Her exceptional leadership and dogged  
25 determination have brought the first phase of the project to a  
26 successful completion and the City and the residents of Jacksonville  
27 are grateful for all her efforts.

28 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become  
29 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective  
30 without the Mayor's signature.

1 Form Approved:

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3           /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos          

4 Office of General Counsel

5 Legislation Prepared By: Jeff Clements, City Council Research

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