

Introduced by Council Member Freeman and Co-Sponsored by Council Members Amaro, Arias, Boylan, J. Carlucci, Carlucci, Carrico, Clark-Murray, Diamond, Gaffney, Jr., Gay, Howland, Johnson, Lahnen, Miller, Peluso, Pittman, Salem, and White and amended on the Floor of Council:

RESOLUTION 2026-641-A

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

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

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

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

1 residents; and

2 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Gentry's service to Jacksonville extends beyond his
3 work with Jacksonville Journey and its newest iteration, having played
4 a key role in establishing the City's first Ethics Commission and
5 serving on numerous boards and commissions, including the Value
6 Adjustment Board, the Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction, the
7 Charter Revision Commission, and the Safety and Crime Reduction
8 Commission; and

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

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

30 **WHEREAS**, as Mr. Gentry steps down from his position as Chair of
31 the Jacksonville Journey Forward Board, the City Council honors his

1 legacy and his commitment to improving the lives of the residents of
2 Jacksonville, and expresses its gratitude for his decades of service,
3 the impact of which is immeasurable and enduring; now therefore

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

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

12 **Section 2. Requesting Emergency Passage Upon Introduction**
13 **Pursuant to Council Rule 4.901.** Emergency passage upon introduction
14 of this legislation is requested. The nature of the emergency is to
15 timely present the resolution to W.C. Gentry on the night of August
16 25, 2026.

17 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
18 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
19 without the Mayor's signature.

20
21 Form Approved:

22
23 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

24 Office of General Counsel

25 Legislation Prepared By: Brandon Russell, City Council Research

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