

1 Introduced by Council Member Johnson and Co-Sponsored by Council
2 Members Peluso, Pittman and Boylan:

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5 **RESOLUTION 2026-413-A**

6 A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE SISTERS
7 OF ST. JOSEPH OF ST. AUGUSTINE FOR MORE THAN A
8 CENTURY OF SERVICE TO THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE,
9 RECOGNIZING THEIR COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP IN
10 EXPANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION DURING AN ERA OF
11 PROFOUND INEQUITY AND THEIR ENDURING LEGACY IN
12 THE LIVES THEY TRANSFORMED; PROVIDING AN
13 EFFECTIVE DATE.

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15 **WHEREAS**, in 1650, in Le Puy-en-Velay, France, the Sisters of St.
16 Joseph were founded upon a bold and unifying vision to serve "the
17 dear neighbor" without distinction, a vision that would later travel
18 across oceans and generations; and

19 **WHEREAS**, on September 2, 1866, in the fragile aftermath of the
20 Civil War, eight Sisters arrived at Picolata Landing along the St.
21 Johns River, stepping into a South defined by reconstruction,
22 resistance, and the urgent need for education among newly freed
23 African Americans; and

24 **WHEREAS**, at a time when the education of formerly enslaved people
25 was not widely supported and, in many instances, actively discouraged,
26 the Sisters of St. Joseph embraced a higher calling, recognizing
27 education not as a privilege to be rationed, but as a right to be
28 realized; and

29 **WHEREAS**, with quiet resolve and unyielding purpose, the Sisters
30 established schools, catechetical missions, and centers of learning
31 throughout Jacksonville, including Holy Rosary, St. Pius V, St.

1 Paul's, Assumption, Bishop Kenny High School, Christ the King School,
2 and numerous outreach initiatives, creating spaces where minds could
3 be formed and futures could be imagined; and

4 **WHEREAS**, their work represented more than instruction, it was
5 an act of transformation, offering dignity through literacy,
6 empowerment through knowledge, and opportunity through access,
7 particularly for communities that had been systematically denied all
8 three; and

9 **WHEREAS**, in advancing education during an era marked by
10 segregation and social division, the Sisters challenged the
11 prevailing norms of their time, not through confrontation alone, but
12 through consistent, courageous action that redefined what service
13 could look like in a divided society; and

14 **WHEREAS**, beyond the classroom, the Sisters extended their
15 mission into the broader community, establishing homes, caring for
16 the sick, supporting the elderly, and responding to epidemics and
17 hardship with compassion rooted in both faith and action; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the Sisters' presence in Jacksonville helped construct
19 an enduring educational and moral framework that continues to
20 influence the city's trajectory, with generations of residents
21 tracing their opportunity, growth, and success, back to institutions
22 founded or shaped by the Sisters; and

23 **WHEREAS**, after more than one hundred years of faithful and
24 transformative service, the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine
25 are now transitioning away from active daily ministry in Jacksonville,
26 a reflection of changing vocations and times, yet not a reflection
27 of diminished impact; and

28 **WHEREAS**, the Sisters' legacy remains firmly rooted in the lives
29 they uplifted, the barriers they helped dismantle, and the belief
30 they carried forward: that education is both a tool of empowerment
31 and an expression of human dignity; now therefore

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

2 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors and commends the
3 Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine for more than a century of
4 extraordinary service, recognizing their unwavering commitment to
5 education, equity, and community uplift. The City Council
6 acknowledges the Sisters' historic role in advancing educational
7 opportunities for African Americans and other underserved populations
8 during a period when such efforts required both courage and
9 conviction. The City Council expresses its profound gratitude for the
10 Sisters' enduring contributions, affirming that their work did not
11 simply educate, it empowered, it elevated, and it expanded what was
12 possible for generations. The City Council declares that while the
13 Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Augustine may be transitioning from
14 daily operations, their legacy does not fade, it lives in every
15 classroom once filled, every barrier once challenged, and every life
16 that now stands taller because they chose to teach, to serve, and to
17 believe.

18 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
19 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
20 without the Mayor's signature.

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22 Form Approved:

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24 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

25 Office of General Counsel

26 Legislation Prepared By: Colleen Hampsey, City Council Research

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