

1 Introduced by Council Member Amaro:
2
3

4 **RESOLUTION 2025-445**

5 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MOURNING THE
6 PASSING OF CANNIE LEE CODY, JR.; PROVIDING AN
7 EFFECTIVE DATE.
8

9 **WHEREAS,** Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., grew up in Jacksonville and at
10 the age of 18, he volunteered for service with the United States
11 Coast Guard; and

12 **WHEREAS,** after his service with the Coast Guard, Cody worked
13 towards his life-long dream of becoming a police officer; he graduated
14 as valedictorian from the Duval County Patrol Academy, served as a
15 highway patrolman for five years, then earned the rank of detective
16 sergeant at the Duval County Sheriff's Office; and

17 **WHEREAS,** in 1964, Sergeant Cody was the lead detective in the
18 racially motivated murder case of Johnnie Mae Chappell, a beloved
19 wife and mother to ten children and resident of the Pickettville
20 neighborhood, who was shot by someone in a passing car because of the
21 color of her skin; and

22 **WHEREAS,** while the case went unsolved for months, Sergeant
23 Cody persevered with the investigation despite extreme opposition
24 from his superiors and mishandled evidence, and he endured death
25 threats for being a law enforcement officer who wanted to be fair to
26 everyone; and

27 **WHEREAS,** Sergeant Cody located a suspect and arrested four men
28 who were charged with first degree murder, though the charges were
29 dropped against three of the men for a lack of evidence and only one
30 was eventually convicted of manslaughter, serving just three years
31 in prison; and

1 **WHEREAS,** Cody was demoted and then dismissed from the Duval
2 County Sheriff's Office, yet even after he lost his career in law
3 enforcement he endeavored to work for justice for Mrs. Chappell; and

4 **WHEREAS,** thirty-two years after the murder of Mrs. Chappell,
5 Cody attended a family reunion of the Chappel family, who had been
6 shattered and scattered after their mother's death; and

7 **WHEREAS,** Cody and Shelton Chappell, who was an infant when his
8 mother was killed, became allies in the search for truth and
9 vindication for the death of a woman Cody had never met and Shelton
10 did not remember since he was so young when she was murdered; and

11 **WHEREAS,** in 2010, Cody authored a book called "The 14th Denial:
12 A Civil Rights Memoir" which inspired the movie "Wanted Justice:
13 Johnnie Mae Chappell" to share this incredibly important story; and

14 **WHEREAS,** in 2020, Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., was honored by the
15 Department of Veterans Affairs in the United States House of
16 Representatives for his dedication to our country and the civil rights
17 Movement; and

18 **WHEREAS,** Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., passed away on May 21, 2025, in
19 Mississippi at the age of 90, after a lifetime of fighting for what
20 is right and serving others; now therefore

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

22 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors the life of
23 Cannie Lee Cody, Jr., and mourns his passing. Mr. Cody's commitment
24 to justice, equality and truth against all odds and in the face of
25 opposition, serves as an inspiration to our city now and will for
26 generations to follow.

27 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
28 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
29 without the Mayor's signature.
30
31

Form Approved:

/s/ Shannon MacGillis

Office of General Counsel

Legislation Prepared By: Colleen Hampsey, City Council Research

GC-#1691833-v2-Honoring_Cannie_Lee_Cody__Jr__(Amaro).DOCX