

1 Introduced by Council Member Johnson and Co-Sponsored by Council
2 Members Pittman and Gaffney, Jr.:

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4
5 **RESOLUTION 2026-75-A**

6 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE JACKSONVILLE FREE
7 PRESS NEWSPAPER FOR FOUR DECADES OF CONTINUOUS
8 PUBLICATION AND SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY,
9 RECOGNIZING ITS FOUNDING BY VISIONARY PUBLISHER
10 RITA L. PERRY AND ITS CURRENT LEADERSHIP UNDER
11 SYLVIA C. PERRY, AND SPECIFICALLY COMMENDING
12 LYNN JONES FOR HER DISTINGUISHED JOURNALISTIC
13 CAREER AND A MOMENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
14 THAT EXEMPLIFIED THE POWER OF HUMANITY, CULTURAL
15 CONTEXT, AND RESPONSIBLE MEDIA ENGAGEMENT;
16 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

17
18 **WHEREAS**, a free, ethical, and community rooted press is
19 foundational to a healthy democracy, civic literacy, and informed
20 public discourse; and

21 **WHEREAS**, founded in 1986 by visionary publisher Rita L. Perry,
22 the *Jacksonville Free Press* was established to ensure that the voices,
23 stories, and lived realities of Black communities in Northeast Florida
24 were not only heard but preserved with dignity, accuracy, and cultural
25 integrity; and

26 **WHEREAS**, now entering its 40th year of continuous publication,
27 the *Jacksonville Free Press* stands as the only African American
28 focused, continually published newspaper of its kind in Northeast
29 Florida, a distinction that underscores both its resilience and its
30 irreplaceable role in the regional media landscape; and

31 **WHEREAS**, under the current leadership of Sylvia C. Perry,

1 daughter of its founder, the *Jacksonville Free Press* has continued
2 its legacy as a family rooted, community accountable institution,
3 advancing a multigenerational commitment to journalistic excellence,
4 civic responsibility, and cultural stewardship; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the *Jacksonville Free Press*, widely recognized as
6 Florida's First Coast Quality Black Weekly, has for decades served
7 as a trusted institution amplifying voices too often marginalized,
8 documenting the social, political, cultural, and economic life of
9 Jacksonville's Black communities, and preserving a historical record
10 that might otherwise be lost; and

11 **WHEREAS**, since 2008, journalist Lynn Jones has been a
12 cornerstone of the *Jacksonville Free Press*, embodying the highest
13 ideals of the profession through integrity, intellectual rigor,
14 cultural fluency, and an unwavering commitment to community centered
15 reporting; and

16 **WHEREAS**, Ms. Jones' distinguished career includes interviewing
17 global and national leaders, chronicling local triumphs and
18 challenges, mentoring emerging journalists, and sustaining the
19 demanding discipline of weekly print journalism that prioritizes
20 accuracy, context, and service over sensationalism; and

21 **WHEREAS**, during the 2025-2026 NFL season, Ms. Jones became the
22 center of an internationally recognized moment following a post-game
23 press conference exchange with the Jacksonville Jaguars head coach,
24 wherein she offered words of affirmation, perspective, and dignity
25 following a hard fought and commendable season; and

26 **WHEREAS**, that moment resonated across media platforms worldwide,
27 generating millions of views and prompting meaningful dialogue
28 regarding professionalism, journalistic norms, and the essential role
29 of empathy, humanity, and cultural intelligence in public discourse;
30 and

31 **WHEREAS**, rather than diminishing journalistic standards, Ms.

1 Jones' exchange elevated them by reminding the nation that context
2 and compassion are not departures from professionalism, but hallmarks
3 of ethical, community aware journalism; and

4 **WHEREAS**, the moment reflected values deeply aligned with
5 Jacksonville's identity, resilience, and civic pride, reinforcing the
6 idea that leadership can be acknowledged without sacrificing
7 accountability and that affirmation can coexist with analysis; and

8 **WHEREAS**, as a result of this national moment, the *Jacksonville*
9 *Free Press* experienced increased readership, expanded subscriptions,
10 and renewed recognition of the indispensable role that local Black
11 owned media institutions play in shaping both local and national
12 narratives; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Lynn Jones' work exemplifies the intellectual,
14 cultural, and ethical labor required to sustain journalism as a public
15 good, and her contributions continue to inspire journalists, readers,
16 and communities across generations; now therefore

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

18 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors and commends the
19 *Jacksonville Free Press* for nearly forty years of continuous
20 publication and exemplary service to the City of Jacksonville,
21 recognizing its enduring commitment to journalistic excellence,
22 democratic engagement, and cultural preservation. The Council
23 recognizes and celebrates the legacy of founder Rita L. Perry, whose
24 visionary leadership established an institution that has informed,
25 empowered, and uplifted generations of Jacksonville residents. The
26 City Council further recognizes Sylvia C. Perry, whose stewardship
27 has sustained and advanced the mission of the Jacksonville Free Press
28 as a trusted, independent, and community accountable media
29 institution. The City Council specifically commends Lynn Jones for
30 her distinguished career in journalism, her unwavering service to the
31 community, and for a nationally significant moment that demonstrated

1 the power of humane, culturally grounded reporting. African American
2 owned and operated media are essential institutions of record,
3 accountability, and historical preservation within the civic life of
4 Jacksonville and beyond.

5 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
6 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
7 without the Mayor's signature.

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9 Form Approved:

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11 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

12 Office of General Counsel

13 Legislation Prepared By: Colleen Hampsey, City Council Research

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