

1 Introduced by Council Members Gaffney, Jr., Johnson, Amaro, Howland,
2 Pittman, White, Salem, and Boylan:

3
4
5 **RESOLUTION 2025-697**

6 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF
7 MARY FRANCES GRIFFIN SPARKS, THE FIRST BLACK
8 FEMALE CORRECTIONS OFFICER WITH JACKSONVILLE
9 SHERIFF'S OFFICE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

10
11 **WHEREAS**, Mary Frances Griffin Sparks, a lifelong resident of
12 Jacksonville, led a life marked by her commitment to public service
13 and love for her community; and

14 **WHEREAS**, Mrs. Sparks was a volunteer elections worker, tutor to
15 underserved children, faithful member of Asbury United Methodist
16 Church, and, most notably, made history as the first Black female
17 corrections officer with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO),
18 where she served for 17 years; and

19 **WHEREAS**, during her time with JSO, Mrs. Sparks became part of
20 history as the officer responsible for guarding Dr. Martin Luther
21 King, Jr., during his visit, and demonstrated her resolve in a later
22 incident when she and another correctional officer were held hostage,
23 remaining calm and courageous throughout the ordeal; and

24 **WHEREAS**, the legacy of Mrs. Sparks continues through her family,
25 who serve the Jacksonville community with pride, including sons Rev.
26 James F. Jennings (Geraldine), Nathaneil Jennings (Mona), Dr. Rudolph
27 Jamison, and Louis A. Wilson (Shirley), and daughters Juanita Allen,
28 Beverley Watson (Waymond), and Sheryl Wilson; now therefore

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

30 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors the life and
31 legacy of Mary Frances Griffin Sparks, the first Black female

1 corrections officer with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and a
2 committed public servant, who courageously paved the way for greater
3 inclusivity within the organization at a precarious time in our nation
4 and city.

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.

8
9 Form Approved:

10
11 /s/ Shannon MacGillis

12 Office of General Counsel

13 Legislation Prepared By: Brandon Russell, City Council Research

14 GC-#1708028-v1-Mary_Frances_Griffin_Sparks_-_Gaffney_(Reso)