

1 Introduced by Council Member Clark-Murray and Co-Sponsored by Council
2 Members Pittman, Miller and Johnson:

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5 **RESOLUTION 2026-246-A**

6 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS
7 OF BESSIE COLEMAN, THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN
8 LICENSED PILOT, COMMEMORATING THE 100TH
9 ANNIVERSARY OF HER DEATH, AND ACKNOWLEDGING MS.
10 COLEMAN'S CONNECTION TO THE ALLENDALE COMMUNITY
11 AND COUNCIL DISTRICT 9; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE
12 DATE.

13
14 **WHEREAS**, born January 26, 1892, in Texas, Bessie Coleman was one
15 of thirteen children born to sharecroppers George and Susan Coleman
16 who were of Native American and African American descent; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Bessie Coleman attended primary school in a segregated
18 one-room schoolhouse and briefly attended Langston University in
19 Oklahoma before moving to Chicago in 1915 to live with her brother,
20 working as a manicurist on the South side of the city; and

21 **WHEREAS**, while in Chicago, Bessie Coleman heard adventurous
22 tales from pilots returning from World War I and it sparked a desire
23 in her to become a pilot herself, however at that time American flight
24 schools did not admit either black or female students; and

25 **WHEREAS**, after learning that France did not have such
26 prohibitions for student pilots, Bessie Coleman first learned French
27 and then attended the Federation Aeronautique Internationale,
28 becoming the first African American woman to earn a pilot's license
29 in 1921; and

30 **WHEREAS**, Bessie Coleman returned to the United States with the
31 dream to establish a flight school for African Americans; and

1 **WHEREAS**, she became involved with the air show circuit, working
2 for several years as a barnstorming pilot, performing daring maneuvers
3 including loops, figure eights, and near-ground dips, only appearing
4 at air exhibitions if the crowd was desegregated; and

5 **WHEREAS**, on April 30, 1926, over Paxon Field in Jacksonville,
6 Florida, Bessie Coleman was practicing the day prior to an air show
7 when a mechanical error caused the plane to spiral downward,
8 tragically killing her mechanic, William Wills, and Ms. Coleman at
9 the age of 34; now therefore

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

11 **Section 1.** The City Council hereby honors the life and
12 contributions of Bessie Coleman, the first African American licensed
13 aviator. Ms. Coleman was a trailblazer who let nothing stand in the
14 way of her dreams and her legacy continues to serve as an inspiration.
15 The Council further wishes to commemorate the 100th anniversary of
16 Ms. Coleman's death and to acknowledge her connection to the Allendale
17 community and Council District 9.

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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