

1 Introduced by Council Member Carlucci and Co-Sponsored by Council
2 Member Pittman:

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4
5 **RESOLUTION 2020-424**

6 A RESOLUTION URGING THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL
7 BOARD TO CONSIDER MEMORIALIZING THE LATE EARL
8 M. JOHNSON SR. FOR HIS LIFE'S WORK FOR THE
9 CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, HIS RECORD OF PUBLIC
10 SERVICE WHICH EXTENDED STATE AND NATION WIDE,
11 AND SERVICE IN THE CREATION OF THE
12 CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF
13 JACKSONVILLE BY NAMING A SCHOOL FOR EARL M.
14 JOHNSON SR.; DIRECTING THE LEGISLATIVE
15 SERVICES DIVISION TO PROVIDE A COPY OF THE
16 RESOLUTION, UPON ADOPTION, TO THE DUVAL COUNTY
17 SCHOOL BOARD AND THE SUPERINTENDENT; PROVIDING
18 AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

19
20 **WHEREAS**, Earl M. Johnson Sr. was born in 1928, the son a
21 railroad laborer in Huntington, West Virginia, and served in the
22 U.S. Army during the Korean War; and

23 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Johnson graduated from Howard University School
24 of Law in 1958, first in his class, having been tutored and
25 mentored by the future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Johnson moved to Jacksonville as a young civil
27 rights attorney in 1958, becoming the first Black member of the
28 Jacksonville Bar Association, and working with Civil Rights legends
29 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Andrew Young and Stetson Kennedy to end
30 Jim Crow laws and segregation in the old core city of Jacksonville,
31 the county of Duval, the State of Florida and the nation as a

1 whole; and

2 **WHEREAS**, the late Earl M. Johnson Sr., litigated nearly all of
3 the Florida school desegregation lawsuits, was an advisor to
4 President John Kennedy, represented the first woman to have a work
5 discrimination case heard before the U.S. Supreme Court, and was
6 inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2016; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Earl Johnson, by the mid-1960's, was expected to
8 become Jacksonville's first Black Mayor, given the emerging
9 majority Black electorate in the old core city in the mid-1960s;
10 and

11 **WHEREAS**, Earl Johnson exemplified rare statesmanship and civic
12 foresight by abandoning personal political ambition to address the
13 dysfunction that existed in the old core city and the surrounding
14 county government which had led to widespread neglect of
15 neighborhoods, inefficient duplication of services, a loss of
16 accreditation of the public school system, a shrinking tax base and
17 public corruption; and

18 **WHEREAS**, Earl Johnson joined the campaign for consolidation
19 and became secretary to the Local Government Study Commission in
20 1965 that led to consolidation, and in 1966 challenged the
21 commission: "You must not only show consolidation is the best hope
22 for the black community, you must show it's the best hope for the
23 entire community"; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Earl Johnson's efforts led to most citizens of the
25 old city and county governments, Black and White, voting for
26 consolidation, and Mr. Johnson went on to serve on the first City
27 Council of the newly consolidated City of Jacksonville as an At-
28 Large member of the Council from 1967-1983; and

29 **WHEREAS**, Earl Johnson was recognized by Council Resolution 83-
30 642-171, as having provided 15 years of "strong and effective
31 leadership" and "'through his quiet effectiveness' provided a

1 foundation of informed professionalism throughout the somewhat
2 hectic years after consolidation to insure that the transition to
3 the new form of government was sound and efficient" and as having
4 been "a bridge between the races, between the rich and the poor and
5 as a conscience for the council whose opinions and judgements were
6 respected by all;" and

7 **WHEREAS**, the Council believes that Earl Johnson's personal
8 commitment to service, ability and philosophical outlook
9 contributed greatly to the betterment of all people of Jacksonville
10 should be memorialized by naming a Duval County school in his
11 honor; and

12 **WHEREAS**, the Duval County School Board at its June 16, 2020
13 meeting voted unanimously to rename six schools currently named
14 after Confederate soldiers and is in the process of establishing a
15 method to decide on a new name for each building with the
16 community's input; and

17 **WHEREAS**, the Council urges the Duval County School Board to
18 rename one of these six schools after Earl M. Johnson Sr.; now
19 therefore

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

21 **Section 1. Urging the Duval County School Board to**
22 **consider naming a school for the late Earl M. Johnson Sr.** The City
23 of Jacksonville hereby urges and encourages the Duval County School
24 Board to memorialize the contributions of Earl M. Johnson Sr. to
25 the City of Jacksonville and his historical accomplishments by
26 renaming one of the six schools identified at the June 16, 2020
27 School Board meeting to be named after the late Earl M. Johnson Sr.
28 recognizing his unselfish devotion to the harmony and prosperity of
29 the City for all of its citizens, his contributions to the Civil
30 Rights Movement and his dogged public service which impacted State
31 and national laws and public policy for future generations.

1 **Section 2. Direction to Circulate a copy of this**
2 **Resolution to the Duval County School Board and Superintendent**
3 **Diane Greene.** The Council hereby directs the Legislative Services
4 Division to forward copies of this resolution, upon adoption, to
5 the Duval County School Board and to Superintendent Diana Greene.

6 **Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
7 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
8 without the Mayor's signature.

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10 Form Approved:

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12
13 /s/ Paige H. Johnston

14 Office of General Counsel

15 Legislation Prepared By: Paige H. Johnston

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