

1 Introduced by Council Member Schellenberg and Co-Sponsored by
2 Council Member Newby:

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4 **RESOLUTION 2019-480**

5 A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE LIFE
6 AND MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MIKE HIGHTOWER
7 UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS LATEST RETIREMENT;
8 PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
9

10 **WHEREAS**, Mike Hightower, a native of Jacksonville's Westside,
11 graduated from Forrest High School and Jacksonville University and
12 began his working life as a shift supervisor for the Hudson Pulp
13 Paper Corporation in Palatka, then served four years in the U.S.
14 Air Force before becoming a junior high school civics teacher and
15 then an accountability design specialist with the Duval County
16 Public Schools; and

17 **WHEREAS**, following a chance meeting with then-presidential
18 candidate Jimmy Carter in 1976, Mr. Hightower managed the
19 Carter/Mondale campaign in Jacksonville which introduced him to the
20 world of campaigns and elections. He was appointed by President
21 Carter as the Florida State Director of the U.S. Department of
22 Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration, then joined Blue Cross
23 Blue Shield of Florida in 1981 as Director of Governmental and
24 Legislative Relations and eventually as a corporate Vice President;
25 and

26 **WHEREAS**, his retirement from Florida Blue in 2014 was short-
27 lived - after four months he joined the Holland & Knight law firm
28 as a senior policy advisor, then in 2015 was appointed Chief Public
29 and Stakeholder Affairs Officer for the JEA, an organization that
30 he knew intimately from having previously served several terms on
31 the JEA Board of Directors, including as Chairman in 2002-2004. In

1 that position he has led JEA's team handling local, state and
2 federal legislative and regulatory policy issues; and

3 **WHEREAS**, throughout his long and varied career, Mike Hightower
4 has been particularly known for two things - his expertise in
5 political campaign management and fundraising, and his dedication
6 to community service in a wide variety of capacities. Mr. Hightower
7 has been integrally involved in well over 400 campaigns serving in
8 key management and fundraising capacities and is conservatively
9 estimated to have raised over \$100 million for political
10 candidates, political parties, and charitable institutions and
11 causes over the course of five decades. He has also helped
12 establish and continues to run an Emerging Leaders Program to
13 introduce up-and-coming talent in Jacksonville to the importance of
14 enlightened political leadership by informing them about the
15 characteristics and needs of the community and teaching the nuts
16 and bolts of the political process; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Hightower has lent his expertise and commitment
18 to the betterment of his community to countless civic and
19 charitable causes over the years. He has served on and chaired
20 boards of directors of organizations that range from the
21 Jacksonville Public Library Foundation to the Jacksonville Chamber
22 of Commerce, and from the Jacksonville Sister Cities Association
23 and Florida Chamber of Commerce to the Board of Visitors of the
24 U.S. Naval Academy and the Ritz Theater and LaVilla Museum Board.
25 He is the recipient of dozens of awards and commendations,
26 including the Florence N. Davis Community Lifetime Achievement
27 Award, the John L. Ricciardelli Lifetime Leadership Achievement
28 Award of the Florida Insurance Council, the Soaring Eagle
29 Distinguished Service Award from the Children's Resource Fund, and
30 the Jacksonville University Distinguished Alumnus Award, among
31 many, many others; and

1 **WHEREAS,** Mike Hightower has recently announced his latest
2 retirement to devote more time to his family, especially his
3 cherished granddaughter Gracie; now therefore

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

5 **Section 1.** The City of Jacksonville hereby honors and
6 commends the life and countless accomplishments of Mike Hightower
7 as he retires from the position of Chief Public and Stakeholder
8 Affairs Officer for the JEA, and extends its heartfelt thanks for
9 his many contributions to the Jacksonville community over the
10 decades. His example of civic stewardship and service are
11 gratefully acknowledged and will be long remembered by those whose
12 lives he positively impacted.

13 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
14 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
15 without the Mayor's signature.

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17 Form Approved:

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19 /s/ *Margaret M. Sidman*

20 Office of General Counsel

21 Legislation Prepared By: Jeff Clements, City Council Research

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