

1 Introduced by Council Member Dennis & Co-Sponsored by Council
2 Members Morgan, Hazouri, Pittman, Freeman, R. Gaffney, DeFoor,
3 Carlucci, Diamond, Newby and Salem:
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6 **RESOLUTION 2019-861-A**

7 A RESOLUTION HONORING AND COMMEMORATING THE
8 LIFE OF RACECAR DRIVER WENDELL SCOTT FOR
9 BREAKING RACIAL BARRIERS AS THE FIRST AFRICAN
10 AMERICAN NASCAR DRIVER AND WINNER OF THE 1964
11 JACKSONVILLE 200 RACE; PROVIDING FOR AN
12 EFFECTIVE DATE.
13

14 **WHEREAS**, Wendell Scott was born on August 29, 1921 in
15 Danville, Virginia. As a boy, Mr. Scott had an affinity for bicycle
16 racing and doing stunts on his roller skates. His love for cars and
17 auto mechanics stemmed from his father who worked as a service
18 driver for multiple families in the area. As a young man, Mr. Scott
19 worked as a taxi driver and in 1943 he married Mary Coles. Mr.
20 Scott served in the segregated U.S. Army in Europe during World War
21 II; and

22 **WHEREAS**, upon leaving the Army, Mr. Scott ran an auto-repair
23 shop. Like some of the other early racecar drivers, Mr. Scott took
24 part in bootlegging moonshine whiskey making daredevil late-night
25 runs in his car. These experiences gave Mr. Scott his noteworthy
26 auto mechanic prowess and exceptional driving skills that would
27 define his career as a racecar driver; and

28 **WHEREAS**, in the early 1950s, a time when much of the country
29 was still segregated, Wendell Scott began his racing career. During
30 this time, NASCAR only allowed white drivers to compete. Mr. Scott,

1 being an African American, was not allowed to participate in NASCAR
2 races and began his racing career by competing in races within the
3 Dixie Circuit, a rival racing organization of the time. After only
4 twelve days into his racing career, Mr. Scott won his first race at
5 Lynchburg, Virginia. He was a prolific racer competing in as many
6 as five races per week in the Dixie Circuit. Despite having to deal
7 with the racism and prejudice that was prevalent in that time, Mr.
8 Scott impressed his peers with his racing skills; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Wendell Scott knew that to become a top competitor in
10 the sport he would have to somehow gain access into the NASCAR
11 ranks. In the early 1950s, Mr. Scott took his car to a local NASCAR
12 event at the old Richmond Speedway. While there, he asked the part-
13 time NASCAR steward to grant him a NASCAR license. Despite some
14 initial hesitation, the steward granted him the license. Mr. Scott
15 was now an official NASCAR driver and the first African American to
16 join the NASCAR ranks; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Mr. Scott raced in NASCAR's regional-level
18 competition for nine years where he won dozens of races. In 1959,
19 he won two regional-competition NASCAR championships: the
20 championship title for drivers of sportsman-class stock cars in the
21 state of Virginia, and he also won the track championship in the
22 sportsman-class at Richmond's Southside Speedway. In 1961, he moved
23 up to the top tier Grand National division of NASCAR where he
24 competed in almost 500 races over a thirteen-year period. In 1964,
25 Wendell Scott won the Jacksonville 200 race at Speedway Park in
26 Jacksonville, Florida making him the first African American to win
27 a NASCAR Grand National event. Mr. Scott continued to race in
28 NASCAR's top divisions until he retired in 1973. During his top
29 tier NASCAR career, Mr. Scott achieved one win and 147 top ten
30 finishes in his 495 career Grand National starts. Mr. Scott died on
31 December 23, 1990 in his hometown of Danville, Virginia; now

1 therefore

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

3 **Section 1.** The City of Jacksonville hereby honors and
4 commemorates the life of racecar driver Wendell Scott for breaking
5 racial barriers as the first African American NASCAR driver,
6 winning the 1964 Jacksonville 200 race, and for his service in the
7 U.S. Army.

8 **Section 2. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become
9 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
10 without the Mayor's signature.

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12 Form Approved:

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14 /s/ Paige H. Johnston

15 Office of General Counsel

16 Legislation Prepared By: Anthony J. Baltiero, City Council Research

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