

Proclamation of the City of Atlantic Beach

in Recognition of

Willie Frank Dudley ***2026 Black History Month Honoree***

WHEREAS, Willie Frank Dudley was born in 1923 and departed this life in 2002, leaving behind a legacy as a man of faith and a devoted member of the Atlantic Beach community; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dudley honorably served his country as a veteran of the United States Navy during World War II, receiving his honorable discharge in 1945; and

WHEREAS, a man of industrious spirit, Mr. Dudley was a self-employed proprietor of several food establishments, and during the late 1950s and early 1960s, he and his wife were instrumental in providing essential services for the African American community, embodying the spirit of entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, as the owner of a local confectionery and grocery store, Mr. Dudley provided credit to the community for basic essential items such as bread and canned goods, ensuring his neighbors' well-being; and

WHEREAS, he further supported local families by providing kerosene and fuel for heaters and owned a rooming house on Francis Avenue that offered a place to stay for those in need; and

WHEREAS, this rooming house also served as a vibrant social destination for weekend parties and dancing, while his wife contributed to the local economy as the owner of a beautician shop on Francis Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dudley was a faithful and supportive member of New Friendship Baptist Church, where he lifted his voice in the adult choir for many years and left behind a loving family to cherish his memory; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting to honor Mr. Dudley for his everlasting contributions as a true pillar of the Atlantic Beach community during Black History Month 2026; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Curtis Ford, Mayor of the City of Atlantic Beach, hereby express my deep appreciation to Willie Frank Dudley and appeal to the entire community to join us on Saturday, February 7, at Jordan Park (1671 Francis Ave.) for our Black History Month Event; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the evening will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a special dedication honoring the late Mr. Dudley and his family, followed by a screening of *Remember the Titans* at 6:00 p.m., with food available starting at 5:00 p.m. provided by the Holy Church of the Living God Revival Center.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and caused the Official Seal of the City of Atlantic Beach to be affixed this 7th day of February 2026.

Curtis Ford, Mayor