

WHEREAS, LaVern Porter-Mitchell, was born in Gainesville, Florida, on April 18, 1950, to Crummie Porter and Carrie Moore-Porter. She was educated in the Alachua County Public School system and graduated in 1968; and

WHEREAS, while in high school, LaVern Porter-Mitchell earned a scholarship to train with dance legend Katherine Dunham and was offered an opportunity to join the Katherine Dunham Dance Company. LaVern then elected to return home to further her education, graduating from Santa Fe College and later attending the University of Florida; and

WHEREAS, while a student at the University of Florida, she started the LaVern Porter Dance Troupe in 1972, where they successfully integrated the university's modern dance troupe during that same year. Relocating to Tampa, Florida, she continued her dance company while employed with the City of Tampa Parks and Recreation Department. Upon her return to Gainesville in 1974, the dance troupe she created thrived, becoming renowned throughout the State of Florida. She collaborated with colleges, universities, and internationally known dance companies and participated in countless dance festivals. Commencing in 2014, LaVern Porter-Mitchell actively participated with 1000 Voices of Florida, Inc., serving not only as a choir member and soloist, but also as its Dance Coordinator; and

WHEREAS, for over half a century, LaVern Porter-Mitchell's love of the community was shared through her dance instruction to countless youth and adults at the T.B. McPherson Center, the Wilhelmina Johnson Resource Center and other area locations. Her discipline and teachings inspired and prepared numerous students to pursue higher artistic education and obtain degrees in dance, music, theatre, visual arts and other related areas; and

WHEREAS, we'd like to honor and recognize her legacy which remains in the hearts of those who knew her, and for those whose love of the arts is a direct result of her many artistic contributions.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Harvey L. Ward, Jr., by the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Gainesville, do hereby proclaim February 15, 2025 as

LaVern Porter-Mitchell Day

in the City of Gainesville and invite all our neighbors to join me in recognizing her dedicated efforts to spread an appreciation of the arts in all of its diversities, forms, and inspirations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of the City of Gainesville, Florida, this 24th day of January 2025.



Harvey L, Ward Mayor