

CITY OF NEWPORT

**RESOLUTION
OF THE
COUNCIL**

No. _____

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WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Newport, legally assembled on this 8th day of July 2020, pauses in its deliberations to pay tribute to The Honorable Paul L. Gaines, who passed away on June 25, 2020 after a short illness; and

WHEREAS, Paul L. Gaines was born in Newport, Rhode Island, on April 20, 1932, and attended the Newport public schools before earning a bachelor's degree in education at Xavier University of Louisiana in 1955. From 1955 to 1957 he served in Europe with the Second Armored Division of the U.S. Army. After his honorable discharge, he served in the Army Reserves for four years. In 1968 he earned a master's degree in counseling at Bridgewater State College (now University) in Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gaines taught Social Studies, Health and Physical Education at Thompson Junior High School. At Rogers High School where he taught History, he was also the assistant and then the Head Basketball Coach. After nine years of teaching in the Newport Public Schools, in 1968 he became Assistant to the President for minority affairs and affirmative action at Bridgewater State College. He retired in 1996 after a 37-year career in education. Upon his retirement, the Afro-American Alumni Society established the Paul L. Gaines Scholarship to benefit deserving Rhode Island and Massachusetts minority students majoring in education or counseling at Bridgewater State College; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, the Newport City Council appointed Mr. Gaines to fill an unexpired term on the Newport School Committee and he was subsequently elected to a full term. In 1977, Mr. Gaines became the first African American elected to the Newport City Council and in September 1981, the Council Members elected him Chairman of the City Council and Mayor of Newport. He was the first African American mayor in New England. During his tenure, the designs and planning for the Newport Police Station and the Newport Tourism and Convention Center were finalized; and

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WHEREAS, the contributions that Mayor Paul L. Gaines made to the community, however, did not end with his retirement from public service. His record of service to the community included his election to the Rhode Island Constitutional Convention in 1985, a three-year term on the Advisory Council of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; the Rhode Island Ethics Commission (Charter Member); and the Newport Canvassing Authority (Chairman, 1997-2006). In addition, he sat on the Board of Trustees of St. Michael's Country Day School, the Newport Historical Society, and the Newport Public Schools Equity in Education Committee. Mayor Gaines also served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Newport County Community Mental Health Center; Newport Public Library Board of Trustees; President's Advisory Board, U.S. Naval War College, Newport; Co-Chair Advisory Board CCRI-Newport Campus; Life Member, NAACP; Newport Sports Advisory Commission; Newport Hospitality Commission and Newport Hospital Corporation; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Gaines was also the Chair of the Committee for the Renovation of Patriots' Park in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, during which he oversaw the construction of a monument for the First Rhode Island Regiment ("the Black Regiment") that fought in the Revolutionary War which was dedicated in 2006; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, Mayor Gaines was inducted into the Newport Sports Hall of Fame. In 2005, he delivered the keynote address at the 58th Annual Reading of the George Washington Letter to the Congregation of Touro Synagogue and in 2006, he received the Living the Dream Award of the Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday Commission. NOW THEREFORE BE IT

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RESOLVED: that the Council of the City of Newport, on behalf of all of its citizens, does hereby express its deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to the family of Mayor Paul L. Gaines in recognition of his many years of service to the City of Newport, his commitment to the residents and children of the community, his efforts to improve the quality of life for all residents, and the time and energy he dedicated to the City and its citizens. AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED: that a certified copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Mayor Paul L. Gaines with the heartfelt condolences and sincere gratitude of the Newport community.

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL

IN COUNCIL

READ AND PASSED

Laura C. Swistak
City Clerk