

**RESOLUTION 2014 –106**

**A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING SEPTEMBER 5, 2014 AS “THE BEACH LADY DAY” IN NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA.**

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch was born on January 13, 1935 in Jacksonville, Florida and was the granddaughter of A.L. Lewis, Florida’s first black millionaire; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Lewis was one of seven founders of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company and was a successful businessman, civic leader, and philanthropist; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Lewis purchased American Beach in 1935 to provide a place for African Americans to vacation during the segregation era; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch was strongly influenced by her grandfather and shared his passion for the preservation of American Beach; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch graduated from Boylan Haven School of Jacksonville and continued her education at the Conservatory at Oberlin College where she double majored in voice and piano; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch traveled around Europe where she was an accomplished opera singer, starring in the German State Opera; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch had a desire for human justice, peace, and protection for the Earth and in 1962 she returned to Jacksonville to promote conservation of the environment, particularly for her beloved American Beach; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch was known as the unofficial historian of American Beach and was the founder of the A.L. Lewis Historical Society; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch successfully lobbied to place American Beach on the National Registry of Historical Places, to designate “Nana”, the 60 foot sand dune at American Beach as property of the National Park Service, and to provide a buffer of intact land between American Beach and development to the north; and

**WHEREAS**; MaVynne Betsch was a strong force behind countless other environmental causes such as butterfly preserves, preservation of wetlands, preservation of pygmy communities in Africa, and preservation of white whales; and a biologist visiting Amelia Island named Whale 1151 “MaVynne” in her honor; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch was raised in a life of luxury, however she gave away her entire fortune to help with environmental causes; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch’s passionate advocacy of the environment and the beach earned her the title of “The Beach Lady” and she enthusiastically carried out “Black History Tours with the Beach Lady” at American Beach; and

**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch was known for her deep convictions, sharp intelligence, and extraordinary courage and the story of her life was the centerpiece of a book by Russ Rymer titled “*American Beach: A Saga of Race and Memory*”; and

**WHEREAS**, many other articles and publications written about The Beach Lady have been featured in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Essence*, *Sierra Club Magazine*, *Coastal Living*, *Southern Living*, and *Preservation: The Magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation*; and The Beach Lady was featured on both CNN and CBS.

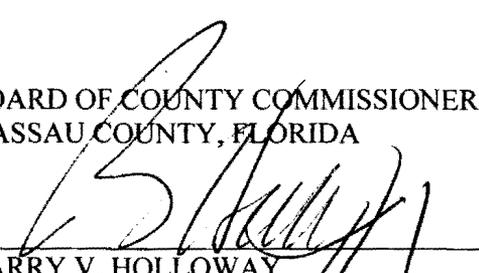
**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch’s seven-foot long coil of thick hair caught the attention of everyone she encountered and she used this opportunity to spread the story of

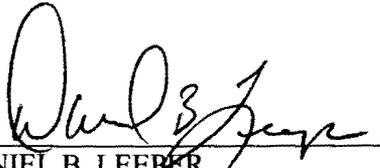
her hope for world peace, her compassion for animals and man-kind, and her encouragement for others to stand up for their beliefs and convictions; and

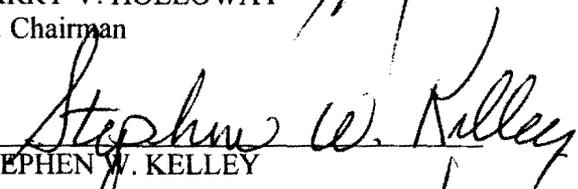
**WHEREAS**, MaVynne Betsch transitioned from her home at American Beach on September 5, 2005, and will always be remembered for her tireless work and significant success in preserving the environment and her beloved American Beach.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, this 25th day of August 2014, the Board of County Commissioners of Nassau County hereby proclaim September 5, 2014 as "The Beach Lady Day".

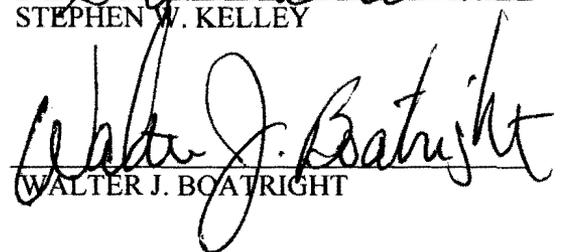
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA

  
BARRY V. HOLLOWAY  
Its: Chairman

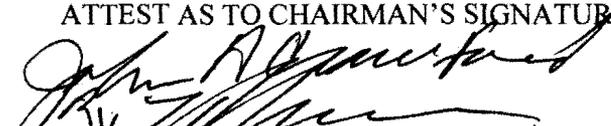
  
DANIEL B. LEEPER

  
STEPHEN W. KELLEY

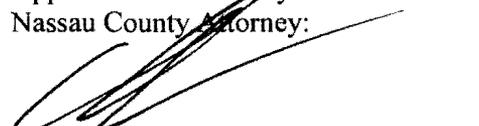
  
PAT EDWARDS

  
WALTER J. BOATRIGHT

ATTEST AS TO CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE:

  
JOHN A. CRAWFORD  
Its: Ex-Officio Clerk

Approved as to form by the  
Nassau County Attorney:

  
DAVID A. HALLMAN