

RESOLUTION NO. 2017- 110

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA PROCLAIMING THE WEEK OF JULY 29 THROUGH AUGUST 6, 2017 AS "GULLAH/GEECHEE NATION APPRECIATION WEEK".

WHEREAS, Nassau County, Florida was established in 1824 after breaking away from Duval County; and

WHEREAS, even prior to its finding, Africans traveled down the St. Marys River, and enslaved Africans were forced to work not only on plantations such as Harrison Plantation, but also in Yulee, O'Neil, and Nassauville at ports and oyster factories; and

WHEREAS, descendants of these Africans have come to be known as Gullah/Geechees; and

WHEREAS, Gullah/Geechees continued to migrate to Nassau County to settle and build family compounds; and

WHEREAS, many of them graduated from historic Peck High School in Fernandina Beach and Pine Forest Community School in Callahan; and

WHEREAS, many visited and still visit historic American Beach which was founded in 1934 under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln Lewis and partners of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company; and

WHEREAS, MaVynne Betsch, who was a direct descendant of Abraham Lincoln Lewis, was the first Florida member of the Gullah/Geechee Nation Wisdom Circle of Elders; and

WHEREAS, Queen Quet, Chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation became the first Gullah/Geechee in the world to speak before the United Nations and worked

closely with MaVynne Betsch to continue to bring more Gullah/Geechees to the Nana Sand Dune at American Beach to honor their ancestors that had toiled in and built this region; and

WHEREAS, Queen Quet has been standing up for rights of Gullah/Geechee people for more than three decades and has headed numerous endeavors that have led to global recognition; and

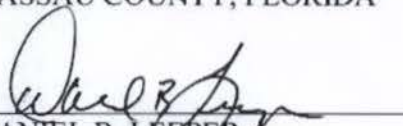
WHEREAS, in 2006, the U.S. Congress passed the "Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Act" which provided \$10 million over 10 years for the preservation and interpretation of historic sites in the Low Country relating to Gullah culture, and in January 2014, the Board of County Commissioners approved placement of Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor signs on U.S. 17 and State Road A1A in Nassau County, Florida; and

WHEREAS, the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners would like to honor the history and legacy of the Gullah/Geechee Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of County Commissioners of Nassau County, Florida this 24th day of July, 2017 that:

1. The Board hereby proclaims the week of July 29 through August 6, 2017, as Gullah/Geechee Nation Appreciation Week in Nassau County, Florida.
2. The Board extends best wishes as they celebrate this year's Gullah/Geechee Nation International Music and Movement Festival in St. Helena, South Carolina, from August 4 through August 6, 2017.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA

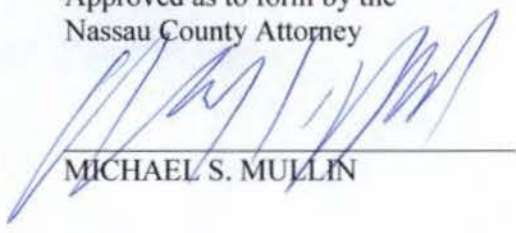

DANIEL B. LEEPER
Its: Chairman

ATTEST AS TO CHAIRMAN'S
SIGNATURE:



JOHN A. CRAWFORD
Its: Ex-Officio Clerk

Approved as to form by the
Nassau County Attorney



MICHAEL S. MULLIN