

City of Gainesville, Florida

Office of Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Bettye Gibbs Jennings is a native of Alachua County, born June 20, 1938 in Hawthorne, Florida, and raised by Cessna Grant and Aletha Walker Gibbs; and

WHEREAS, Bettye Jennings attended Chester Shell School, grades first through twelfth, was crowned Little Miss Shell, and Miss Shell High, and graduated Valedictorian in 1956, as a member of its last graduating class; and

WHEREAS, Bettye Jennings was not allowed to attend the University of Florida, just 17 miles away, because of her race, but attended and graduated from Bethune-Cookman College/University in Daytona Beach, Florida, with a BA degree in Music Education; while there she sang in the concert Charole which performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Bettye Jennings was later able to attend the University of Florida where she received a MEd degree in Early Childhood; this afforded her the opportunity to study the private and public systems in England. Bettye taught 30 of her 33 years in Alachua County Schools; and

WHEREAS, Bettye Jennings was the first African-American teacher to integrate the county school systems during the 1965-1966 school term, by teaching music at both Archer Community and Archer Elementary Schools in Archer, Florida; and

WHEREAS, Bettye Jennings served four years as National President of the Charmettes, Inc., served as Affiliate Board Member of the National Council of Negro Women (founded by Mary McCloud Bethune and under the leadership of Dr. Dorothy Height of Washington D.C.), was a member of the first Drug Task Force established by the Alachua County Commission, and served as a volunteer for many not-for-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, Bettye Gibbs Jennings is the wife of former Gainesville Mayor-Commissioner Ed Jennings Sr., and mother of former Florida Representative Ed Jennings Jr.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Pegeen Hanrahan, by the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Gainesville, do hereby proclaim June 28, 2008 as

Bettye Gibbs Jennings Day

in the City of Gainesville, and invite all our citizens to join me in expressing our appreciation to Bettye Jennings for her positive contributions to our community and our children, and wish her success in all her future endeavors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the official seal of the City of Gainesville, Florida, this 19th day of June, A.D., 2008.

Pegeen Hanrahan
Mayor