



Resolution Requesting Support for a Historical Marker Honoring Augustus "Gus" Tart

WHEREAS Augustus "Gus" Tart was born into slavery in South Carolina in 1840 and later became a free man, moving to the area of what was then known as Walton County somewhere around 1864 where he married, fathered two children, and was a cook for one of the founders of Fort Walton Beach, John Thomas Brooks; and

WHEREAS Gus was an early pioneer in Walton County (now Okaloosa County), began making significant contributions to the development of Northwest Florida; receiving a Land Grant of 135.5 acres under the Homestead Act of 1862 from President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903; and

WHEREAS Gus was a respected member of the community, known for his expertise as a fishing and hunting guide, his hospitality, and his relationships with prominent figures in Florida, including governors, senators, judges, and other dignitaries; and

WHEREAS Gus' legacy includes his contributions to the development of Garnier's Bayou and the surrounding areas, as well as his role in shaping the history of Okaloosa County; and

WHEREAS Gus Tart's gravesite, located adjacent to the Shalimar Library Cemetery, is the only grave at the cemetery and serves as a testament to his historical significance; and

WHEREAS the diligent work undertaken by the Special Committee reflects a commitment to historical accuracy and community engagement. By leveraging resources from both the Shalimar Library and Ms. Jane Brooks, the committee ensured that their recommendation was grounded in thorough research and local insight, thereby amplifying the cultural value of commemorating Mr. Gus Tart's contributions; and

WHEREAS the NAACP, Okaloosa County Branch's Special Committee, led by Ms. Diane Dillard, relied upon information received from the Shalimar Library, and research conducted by Mrs. Kay Brooks and US Census data to support their recommendation to honor Mr. Tart's legacy with a Historical Marker near his gravesite; and



WHEREAS the Town of Shalimar, Florida can honor and preserve the legacy of Augustus "Gus" Tart for future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NAACP, Okaloosa County Branch, calls upon:

1. The Town of Shalimar, Florida to formally recognize the historical significance of Augustus "Gus" Tart and his contributions to the community. and we call upon
2. The Town of Shalimar, Florida to support the efforts to erect a Historical Marker at or near the gravesite of Augustus "Gus" Tart, located on Richbourg Ave or adjacent to the Shalimar Library Cemetery. And we call upon
3. The Town of Shalimar, Florida to collaborate with the NAACP, Okaloosa County Branch, and other relevant organizations such as the Shalimar Library, to pursue the designation of a State Historical Marker for Mr. Tart's gravesite. And we call upon
4. The Town of Shalimar, Florida to assist in updating the description of the parcel of land on the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser's website to reflect its historical significance as the gravesite of Augustus "Gus" Tart. And we call upon
5. The Town of Shalimar, Florida to encourage the community to honor and celebrate the life and legacy of Augustus "Gus" Tart through educational initiatives and public recognition. And

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the placement of a commemorative brick in honor of Augustus "Gus" Tart will be placed on the NAACP, Okaloosa County Branch, Legacy Walk of Fame at Chester Pruitt Park in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, to further recognize his contributions to the community and history of Northwest Florida; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the NAACP, Okaloosa County Branch calls upon the town leaders of Shalimar, Florida to direct its staff to take all necessary actions to support the establishment of a State Historical Marker; ensuring the proper recognition of Augustus "Gus" Tart's contributions to the history of Shalimar and to Northwest Florida.

Adopted this ninth day of February, two thousand and twenty-six

Sabu L. Williams
President

Sonya Faison-Vazquez
Secretary