

Resolution 23-

WHEREAS, the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama wish to formally recognize and honor Mr. Thomas (Tom) Jackson Owen for his superb coaching ability and empowering desire to pass valuable football knowledge along to others. Mr. Owen consistently prepared all his players to perform at the highest level of competition, maximizing their potential, he pushed them to extract the most success out of whichever career path they chose; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Owen had always maintained a love for the game of football, even before his coaching career began, he played college football at Florida State University where he met his wife and proudly graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in the year 1954; and

WHEREAS, shortly after graduating from college, Mr. Owen began his coaching career at Webster High School, near his childhood home. This position was temporary, however, as he was soon drafted into the U.S. Army, gaining the opportunity to coach the team that was runner-up to the College National Championship football team that year; and

WHEREAS, he continued to enhance his coaching experience and knowledge as the years progressed, taking positions at other high schools including Bradenton, Ft. Lauderdale, Eustis, and Daytona Beach. His love of knowledge led him to pursue a master's degree from the University of Florida and then an Associate of Arts degree from Alabama A&M University; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Owen was brought to Huntsville in 1964 after receiving an outstanding reference from coaching legend Paul "Bear" Bryant, who referred to Tom as the "best coach in the country" and encouraged Huntsville High School to pursue him as their next head football coach. He inevitably accepted the position. During his time there, he led two teams to state championship games, coached all-star teams in Alabama and Florida, and was inducted into the Madison County Sports Hall of Fame before his departure from the school's program in 1975; and

WHEREAS, even after his coaching career came to an end, Mr. Owen remained a prominent influence in the community devoted to educating youth and preparing them for future endeavors. He served as principal of Lee High School from 1976 until his retirement in 1994. During his time at Lee, he also taught history courses at Calhoun Community College. He was well known as a very successful coach and considered a treasured mentor by his colleagues, he coached many talented individuals who went on to establish distinguished careers as doctors, lawyers, engineers, even a space shuttle commander, and a space shuttle pilot; and

WHEREAS, after over a decade as Lee High School's Principal and over 145 wins in his twenty years as a head football coach at various schools Tom retired. Content and wise, he penned these words in his farewell letter to Lee High Staff "Robert Louis Stevenson postulates that 'sooner or later in life, everyone sits down to a banquet of memories.' As the shadows of my life grow taller you will be ever present in my banquet of memories. As Dag Hammarskjold said, "for all that has been, thanks, for all that is to come, yes."'

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council and Mayor of Huntsville, Alabama recognize the life and legacy of Coach Thomas Owen, with sincere gratitude for his substantial contributions as a coach and a leader within the Community.

ADOPTED this the ____ day of _____, 2023.

President of the City Council of
the City of Huntsville, Alabama

APPROVED this the ____ day of _____, 2023.

Mayor of the City of
Huntsville, Alabama