

Proclamation

The seal of the City of Tampa, Florida, featuring a ship on the water, surrounded by the text "CITY OF TAMPA, FLORIDA" and "ORGANIZED JULY 15, 1887". The seal is flanked by decorative flourishes.

Jane Castor, Mayor

WHEREAS, the City of Tampa takes pride in recognizing individuals whose commitment and dedication have made a lasting impact on our community and its citizens; **Ralph Smith**, a valued Community Leader and Advocate for Literacy is one such person; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith attended Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan earning his Bachelor's Degree in Economics with a Minor in Business Computers, and where he developed his passion for computers and programming; and

WHEREAS, upon graduation, Mr. Smith worked in the banking industry in Ann Arbor, Michigan as a computer programmer, and thereafter honed his skills in Miami and Orlando, Florida in several banking institutions including Citibank, where he served as a Senior Programmer Analyst prior to his promotion to an Assistant Vice President of the North American Trade Finance Division and making Tampa, Florida his home in 1993, and where he started his own company, R & L Computing Services; and

WHEREAS, wanting to make a difference in young people's lives, especially those at-risk and within low-income families, Mr. Smith established Computer Mentors Group, Inc. in 1997 as a volunteer project, and since its beginnings, it has positively impacted over 2,000 high-school youth, giving them the knowledge and tools to empower them for future success, developing their talents and introducing them to careers in computer technology, and more than 700 personal computers have been given to Tampa residents; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, Computer Mentor's Group has grown to include additional initiatives including Teen Tech, the annual Teen Business Challenge, and KidsCode, the organization's largest program serving over 500 elementary and middle school students each year, and after twenty-five years of dedication to the organization as its Founder and Executive Director, Mr. Smith is retiring; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith has been dedicated to the Tampa Bay area community serving with organizations such as the City of Tampa Equal Business Opportunity Advisory Council, the Hillsborough County School District Diversity Council, and as a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity's Tampa Pi Iota Chapter, and over the years, he has been recognized for his contributions including receiving the National Council of Negro Women's *Community Service Award*, and Bay News 9's *Hero of the Year Award*.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby proclaim Friday, January 7, 2022 as

"RALPH SMITH DAY"

in the city of Tampa, Florida and urge all citizens to join me in congratulating him on his retirement and thanking him for all he has contributed to our community over the years, especially for his commitment to our youth and proving them knowledge and countless opportunities.

Dated in Tampa, Florida this 7th day of January 2022.

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Mayor