

# In Memoriam



*Jane Castor, Mayor*

**WHEREAS**, the City of Tampa takes pride in recognizing those individuals whose commitment and dedication have made a lasting impact on our community and nation; one of these individuals was **Vivian Owens Heyward**, a well-respected member of the Tampa, Florida community and a dedicated advocate and activist who passed away on Sunday, March 13, 2022, at the age of 72; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Heyward was a Tampa, Florida native, born on January 3, 1950 to the late St. Nazier Owens and Georgia Mae Henry Owens, and she grew up in the Jackson Heights neighborhood where she attended George S. Middleton High School and Hillsborough Community College, and thereafter received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Human Services from Springfield College Tampa Bay; and

**WHEREAS**, among Ms. Heyward's many contributions to business, the economic success of Tampa, and elevating the quality of life for its residents throughout her working career include serving with the Hillsborough County Early Childhood Development Center, Hillsborough County School Board, Kash 'N Karry Food Stores, Bower's Realty, the City of Tampa's Office of Management Information Systems, the University of South Florida, WEDU Channel 16 Television, and Drug Abuse Comprehensive Coordinating Office (DACCO) Behavioral Health where she served as a Substance Abuse Counselor; and

**WHEREAS**, as a trailblazer, Ms. Heyward had the distinction of being the first African American woman to own and operate a used car dealership, Heyward Auto Sales where she was known for her outstanding service and it gave her insight, prompting her to establish *Stop the Gang and Gun Violence* and its *Stop the Violence Candlelight Vigil* campaign that honors victims of violent crimes, comforts their families, and promotes crime awareness; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Heyward loved her hometown and served with many organizations including Jackson Heights Neighborhood Crime Watch, A Positive Image Tampa Bay, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Rise Up for Peace, a lifetime member of New Bethel Progressive Missionary Baptist Church where she was part of its Gospel Chorus, and she was a candidate for Tampa City Council in 1995; and

**WHEREAS**, beloved by the community for her commitment and dedication, Ms. Heyward has been recognized numerous times including as On-Que Magazine's *Citizen of the Year*, the City of Tampa Police Department's *Chief's Award*, she was a recognized member of the *100 Distinguished Black Women Tampa Bay Chapter*, and her many other honors bestowed were a testament to the dedication and support she gave to others; and

**WHEREAS**, well-known as a *Beacon of Light*, and for her efforts to ensure the community was a safe and equitable place for all its residents to live, work, and play, Ms. Heyward will forever be remembered for her deep love of her family, friends, and her community, and as someone who was looked up to and set an example for others to emulate, and for her passion, advocacy, and service.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby urge all citizens to join me in publicly expressing sorrow and heartfelt appreciation to the Vivian Owens Heyward Family, her beloved children Roland, Betty, Tamara, Renae, Chris, Carabel, and Christopher, her Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren, and other family members, and to express our hopes that they will take solace in their many cherished memories and the vast impact of her life on our community.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 2022.

*Jane Castor*  
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Mayor