

RESOLUTION OF
THE SEMINOLE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HONORING RETIRED U.S. AIR FORCE COLONEL JOSEPH W. KITTINGER II

WHEREAS, upon the death of U.S. Air Force Colonel Joseph W. Kittinger II, the Seminole County community and our nation lost a true legend, American hero, and hall-of-fame aviator on December 9th, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Colonel Joseph W. Kittinger II along with his service to the United States and Seminole County; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Joseph W. Kittinger II was born in Florida in 1928 and educated at a private high school focused on military discipline, he went on to graduate from the University of Florida and in March of 1949, he enlisted in the US. Air Force as an aviation cadet. Upon completion of his training, in March 1950, Colonel Kittinger received his pilot wings and was commissioned as second lieutenant; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Kittinger was assigned to the Fighter Test Section, flying the F-84 Thunderjet and F-86 Sabre. He was then transferred, in 1954, to the Air Force Missile Development Center at Holloman Air Force Base where he impressed flight surgeon Colonel John Stapp with his jet piloting skills which led to his participation in aerospace medical research; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, Colonel Kittinger made three research stratospheric parachute jumps from 67,000, 67,500, and 102,800 feet, thus achieving a record which stood for 52 years and subsequently received the Harmon Trophy awarded by President Eisenhower; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Kittinger completed 483.5 military missions over North Vietnam and after serving three combat tours, Colonel Kittinger's plane was shot down at the end of his voluntary third tour which led to him spending 11 months as a prisoner of war; and

WHEREAS, after retiring in 1978, Colonel Kittinger stayed connected to aviation by barnstorming, skywriting, banner towing, and piloting hot air balloons around the world, winning the prestigious Gordon Bennet Gas Balloon Race four times, and making the first solo gas balloon flight across the Atlantic Ocean, launching from Maine and landing in Italy 86 hours later; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Kittinger's many military awards and decorations include: six Distinguished Flying Crosses; two Silver Stars; two Legion of Merits; three Bronze Stars with Valor; two Purple Hearts; the Meritorious Service Medal; twenty-four Air Medals, and the Prisoner of War Medal. In 2008 Colonel Kittinger was awarded the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum Lifetime Achievement award and was selected by the U.S. Park Service as one of the most famous aviators in the past 100 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners hereby honors the lifetime service of Retired U.S. Air Force Colonel Joseph W. Kittinger for his distinguished contributions to our nation and Seminole County.

ADOPTED this 24th day of January 2023

Amy Lockhart, Chairman
Seminole County Board of County Commissioners