

1 [Honoring Susan Solomon]

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3 **Resolution honoring lifelong San Francisco educator and activist, Susan Solomon, on**
4 **her retirement from United Educators of San Francisco.**

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6 WHEREAS, Susan Solomon is a lifelong educator, passionate activist, dedicated
7 neighbor, and loving and beloved parent, partner, sister, friend, aunt, great-aunt, and
8 grandmother, and her legacy is that of a tireless leader who cares deeply for the happiness,
9 well-being, and growth of her community; and

10 WHEREAS, Susan was born in San Francisco on December 7, 1954, to Herschel, a
11 public school teacher, and Josephine "Jo" Solomon; she was the second born in what would
12 be a family of four daughters, who all raised their own families throughout the Bay Area; and

13 WHEREAS, Susan grew up in a politically engaged family which nurtured a strong
14 sense of justice and solidarity, and a strong sense of humor, flavored with sarcasm, from her
15 mother; and

16 WHEREAS, As a child and young adult, Susan studied piano at the San Francisco
17 Conservatory of Music and was an accomplished pianist; later, Susan and her husband Fred
18 often enjoyed live jazz and folk concerts; Susan continues to share her love of music with her
19 grandchild, singing the protest songs of yesterday and today; and

20 WHEREAS, Throughout her childhood, Susan's family moved often, including a short
21 stint in the recently-developed Saint Francis Square in the Western Addition, where Susan
22 would later settle with her own family; and

23 WHEREAS, Due to the frequent moves, she attended numerous public schools in San
24 Francisco and Daly City, ultimately graduating from Lowell High School with the class of 1972;
25 and

1 WHEREAS, Susan went on to attend University of California Berkeley, and was among
2 the first students to graduate with a degree in genetics, a new major at the time; while she had
3 initially planned to go into medicine, the classes that brought her the most joy during her
4 undergraduate days revolved around art and education, two themes that would prove central
5 to her career; and

6 WHEREAS, After completing her degree, Susan moved to Buffalo, New York, to live
7 with Fred Pecker; she worked in a daycare, and after a frigid year in the far north they moved
8 to New York City, where Susan ultimately earned her M.A. in Early Childhood Education from
9 the Bank Street College of Education, and worked in daycares and preschools in Manhattan;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Susan and Fred were married at San Francisco's City Hall in 1977, and
12 decided to move to the Bay Area when they were expecting their first child in late 1983; and

13 WHEREAS, They first moved to Oakland, where their son Herschel Pecker was born in
14 early 1984, and then settled in St. Francis Square in 1985 after their daughter Naomi Solomon
15 was born; and

16 WHEREAS, Susan still lives in the same apartment at St. Francis Square today and
17 lives across from her son Herschel Pecker and his partner Courtney Hight, and their child; and

18 WHEREAS, Susan has been a committed and caring community leader in her over 35
19 years as a St. Francis Square cooperator, serving on the Board of Directors and Building &
20 Grounds Committee at various times, and one of Susan's first acts at St. Francis Square was
21 lobbying for and designing a new play structure for community's children, which is still in use
22 today; and

23 WHEREAS, When they first moved to the Bay Area, both Susan and Fred took
24 classroom teaching positions with low-income preschoolers at the Head Start program, and
25 immediately began organizing parents and fellow teachers to improve conditions by forming a

1 union; the campaign was successful and workers eventually secured a contract, but
2 management responded by firing Susan for being pregnant – something that was illegal but
3 common at the time; and

4 WHEREAS, With the support from Susan's uncle LeRoy King, Fred found work with
5 International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 6, first working sporadically on the
6 waterfront and later securing a regular job at Guittard Chocolate, and thanks to union wages
7 and benefits, Susan was largely able to stay home with their children during their early years;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, During this time, Susan also worked at Telegraph Hill Co-Op Nursery
10 School, where Herschel and Naomi attended; she cared for a niece and two nephews, and led
11 occasional art classes for neighborhood kids in her backyard as well as art classes at her
12 children's elementary school, John Swett Alternative Elementary, and the Meadows-
13 Livingstone School; Susan was also active in the Parents' Club at John Swett; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1999, she became a long-term third grade substitute at John Swett, and
15 the following year transitioned to teaching kindergarten there; Susan would continue teaching
16 at John Swett until the elementary school closed in 2006; and

17 WHEREAS, Susan and Fred raised their children to have a dedication to social justice
18 and a deep love of learning; before they could walk, Herschel and Naomi were carried and
19 pushed in strollers on picket lines and marches, and learned chants and protest songs
20 alongside nursery rhymes and bedtime stories, and attended public schools for their entire K-
21 12 education; and

22 WHEREAS, Susan and Fred built a home that was always filled with music, people,
23 and good food, constantly sharing Jewish family traditions and dishes; they celebrated
24 Hannukah with standing-room-only latke parties and Passover with seders that dug deep into
25 not only Jewish history but the history of people's movements for liberation and justice across

1 the world and as parents; Susan and Fred fostered a deep love and commitment to family and
2 friends, a drive for real civic and community engagement, and an appreciation of the arts and
3 reading; and

4 WHEREAS, Susan's involvement with United Educators of San Francisco (UESF)
5 began in 2001, while teaching kindergarten at John Swett, and from 2001-2003 she was an
6 Executive Board member, representing Elementary Division teachers; and

7 WHEREAS, In 2003, she was elected UESF Secretary, a role she held until she was
8 elected Executive Vice President in 2012; from 2006-2012, Susan also served as a UESF
9 Staff Representative; and

10 WHEREAS, During her time as Executive Vice President, Susan worked tirelessly to
11 unionize Creative Arts Charter School, marking a major victory for charter school educators
12 seeking fair wages, representation, and benefits; and

13 WHEREAS, Another high point of Susan's time as Executive Vice President came in
14 2017, when she was proud to serve on the California Federation of Teachers' (CFT) Racial
15 Justice Task Force, which resulted in a report entitled, "Reclaiming the Promise of Racial
16 Equity for Black Males in California"; this report was adopted by unanimous vote at the
17 subsequent CFT Convention; and

18 WHEREAS, Just before Susan took office as President of UESF in 2018, Fred was
19 diagnosed with late-stage terminal cancer, and he passed away later that year; they were
20 married for 41 years and the loss was, and remains, immeasurable; friends and family from
21 across the country and as far away as Greece visited during Fred's final months, and
22 countless neighbors, friends, relatives, and colleagues showed up with hot meals and hugs for
23 months during and after his illness; a testament to the deep love and large, beautiful
24 community that Fred and Susan built over the years, and which Susan continues to cherish;

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1 Susan has attributed much of her growth and development as a labor leader to Fred's
2 guidance, partnership, and support, and the feeling was mutual; and

3 WHEREAS, Susan also currently serves as the Vice President for Political Activity at
4 the San Francisco Labor Council, a California Federation of Teachers Vice President, and a
5 member of the American Federation of Teachers Program and Policy Council; and

6 WHEREAS, Over the past year, Susan's powerful leadership has guided UESF
7 through this pandemic, as she has worked unceasingly to prioritize the health and safety of
8 San Francisco's educators, students, school workers, and families; and

9 WHEREAS, Susan Solomon has been an integral part of San Francisco activism for
10 her entire life and has been dedicated to educating the next generation with passion, care, art,
11 and a deep sense of justice; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby honor Susan
13 Solomon on her retirement from the United Educators of San Francisco and thank her for her
14 service; and, be it

15 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, along with her
16 loving family, friends, and labor siblings are thrilled to see her transition into the role of
17 grandmother "Bubby", and we know her dedication to educating the next generation with
18 passion, care, art, and a deep sense of justice will continue to extend far beyond her time with
19 her beautiful grandchild.

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