

1 [Gideon Anniversary.]

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3 **Resolution establishing March 18, 2003 as Gideon Day in commemoration of the 40th**
4 **anniversary of the decision mandating the right to counsel for all regardless of income.**

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6 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco has a long standing tradition of
7 supporting equal justice regardless of income; and

8 WHEREAS, On March 18, 1963, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled
9 that the exercise of constitutional rights ought not to depend on a person's wealth or
10 education; and,

11 WHEREAS, The Supreme Court further affirmed that trial and conviction without the
12 assistance of counsel is fundamentally unfair and violates the Sixth and Fourteenth
13 Amendments to the United States Constitution; and,

14 WHEREAS, Forty years after the Gideon decision, implementation of the right to
15 counsel is extremely uneven across the nation, and people in other jurisdictions who cannot
16 afford counsel are denied their basic right to a qualified attorney, resulting in unjust, life-
17 altering verdicts; and,

18 WHEREAS, Public trust and confidence in criminal justice systems are shaken by
19 exoneration of the innocent, revelations of overloaded and under-funded indigent defense
20 systems, and a sense that the quality of justice people receive is determined by the amount of
21 money they have; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby declares March 18,
23 2003 to be Gideon Day in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the decision mandating
24 the right to counsel for all, regardless of income.

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