

1 [Maria Branyas Day - November 7, 2023]

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3 **Resolution commending San Francisco-born supercentenarian, Maria Branyas, the**
4 **world’s oldest known living person; and declaring November 7, 2023, as “Maria**
5 **Branyas Day” in the City and County of San Francisco.**

6

7 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas was born on March 4, 1907 in San Francisco, California, to
8 an expatriate Spanish family (of Catalan origin) who moved to San Francisco in 1906 after the
9 Great Earthquake and Fire, looking for economic opportunities to ensure their family thrived;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, With San Francisco in ruins and struggling to rebuild itself after the 1906
12 earthquake and fire, Maria Branyas’ family eventually moved on to New Orleans, and then
13 finally relocated back to Spain in 1915; and

14 WHEREAS, Due to the German naval presence in the Atlantic Ocean during the First
15 World War, the family’s boat was rerouted through Cuban waters and the Azores in order to
16 ensure safe passage, and Maria’s father died of tuberculosis on the extended lengthy voyage,
17 while Maria herself lost her hearing in one ear after falling from the upper deck down to the
18 lower deck while playing with her brothers; and

19 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas’ mother remarried after the death of her husband at sea,
20 and the family subsequently settled first in Barcelona, Spain and subsequently moved
21 northeast to the city of Banyoles in Spain; and

22 WHEREAS, In July of 1931, Maria Branyas married a traumatologist named Dr. Joan
23 Moret with whom she had three children, August, Maria Teresa, and Rosa; and

24 WHEREAS, During the Spanish Civil War, Maria Branyas was employed as a nurse
25 working by her husband’s side at a Nationalist field hospital in Trujillo, Extremadura, and

1 later as a nurse and her husband’s assistant when he became the director of the Josep
2 Hospital in Girona, until his death in 1976; and

3 WHEREAS, In the 1990s, Maria Branyas travelled to Egypt, Italy, the Netherlands, and
4 England, taking up hobbies such as sewing, music and reading; and

5 WHEREAS, In 2000, at the age of 93, she moved to a nursing home in Olot, Catalonia,
6 after contracting pneumonia, where she thrived as an active and engaged resident, continuing
7 to perform exercises until her mobility eventually deteriorated; and

8 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas played the piano until she was 108 years of age, and now
9 uses a voice-to-text platform to communicate due to hearing loss; and

10 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas has 11 grandchildren, and has already outlived her eldest
11 son, August, who died in a tractor accident at the age of 86; and

12 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas became a centenarian in 2007, and a supercentenarian by
13 2017, which is achieved by about one in 1,000 centenarians; and

14 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas became the then-oldest person to contract and recover
15 from COVID-19 in March of 2020, and used the experience to call for better medical and
16 social treatment of the elderly, at a time in the pandemic when many doctors across the world
17 were struggling with choices about who to prioritize aiding with limited healthcare resources
18 and a strained healthcare workforce, telling *The Observer*, “This pandemic has revealed that
19 older people are the forgotten ones of our society. They fought their whole lives, sacrificed
20 time and their dreams for today's quality of life. They didn't deserve to leave the world in this
21 way.”; and

22 WHEREAS, In July 2020, a research study into the impact of the coronavirus pandemic
23 on elderly care home residents conducted by the Spanish National Research Council and Dalt
24 Pharmacy, was dubbed *Proyecto Branyas* ('Project Branyas') in honor of Maria Branyas and
25 her example and advocacy; and

1 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas officially became the oldest living person in the world on
2 January 17, 2023, after the death of Lucile Randon of France, and became the oldest person
3 to have ever resided in Spain on April 21, 2023 after surpassing Ana María Vela Rubio, and
4 she became the oldest emigrant ever on May 14, 2023 after surpassing Tekla Juniewicz; and

5 WHEREAS, Maria Branyas continues to inspire the world with her longevity,
6 perseverance, good humor, quick wit, vast institutional knowledge, verve and deep wisdom
7 earned from a life well-lived, including filmmakers like Academy Award-nominated
8 documentarian, Sam Green, who has chronicled her impact and that of other
9 supercentenarians in film, and she has continued to intrigue the scientific and medical
10 communities who have made her the ongoing subject of scientific research as a result of her
11 lack of health or memory issues despite her advanced age; and

12 WHEREAS, When asked about the secret to her long life, Maria Branyas credits an
13 intentional life of “order, tranquility, good connection with family and friends, contact with
14 nature, emotional stability, no worries, no regrets, lots of positivity, and staying away from
15 toxic people.”; and

16 WHEREAS, San Francisco is proud to call itself the birthplace of the world’s oldest
17 living person, Maria Branyas, who will be 116 years and 246 days on the final adoption of this
18 resolution, and has much to teach us all at this critical moment in our planet’s history on how
19 to live with integrity, love, humanity, and hope; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
21 commends San Francisco-born supercentenarian, Maria Branyas, the world’s oldest known
22 living person and declares November 7, 2023 as “Maria Branyas Day” in the City and County
23 of San Francisco.

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