

1 [John and Ina Dearman Day - March 28, 2026]

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3 **Resolution recognizing March 28, 2026, as John and Ina Dearman Day in the City and**
4 **County of San Francisco in recognition of their dedication to advancing civil rights,**
5 **justice, and equality.**

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7 WHEREAS, John Dearman, who was born on March 28, 1931, and Ina Flemming (later
8 Ina Dearman), who was born on February 4, 1936, became widely-admired and beloved San
9 Francisco leaders, breaking barriers and dedicating their lives to advancing civil rights, justice,
10 and equality, always standing up for the right thing and giving voice to those who had not
11 been heard; and

12 WHEREAS, John was born into poverty in segregated Texas, grew up in segregated
13 primary schools, and as a child worked as a sharecropper picking cotton; and

14 WHEREAS, John succeeded academically despite the obstacles and discrimination he
15 faced throughout his childhood, attending Wiley College and earning a law degree from
16 Wayne State University in Michigan; and

17 WHEREAS, John sought and was denied work as a lawyer in Michigan for two years
18 following his graduation from law school, supplementing his income as a social worker; and

19 WHEREAS, When in 1959, having determined that he would not be able to pursue a
20 legal career in Michigan, John moved to California, where racial minorities faced widespread
21 economic disadvantage and extreme wealth inequality, and landlords were refusing to rent or
22 sell homes to African Americans; and

23 WHEREAS, John met Willie Brown soon after moving to San Francisco, and they both
24 became prominent figures in the fight for civil rights after protesting housing discrimination at
25 developments in Forest Knolls that refused to sell homes to African Americans, with their civil

1 disobedience and further contemporaneous community activism helping lead to the passage
2 of the Fair Housing Act of 1968; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1965, John and Willie Brown founded the law firm Brown, Dearman &
4 Smith in the heart of the Fillmore and, among other cases, represented protestors during the
5 Civil Rights Movement; and

6 WHEREAS, John was appointed to the Municipal Court of San Francisco by former
7 Governor Jerry Brown on March 28, 1977, advanced to the Superior Court in 1979, served as
8 Presiding Judge from 1990 to 1991, and spent the final nine years of his judicial career
9 overseeing the San Francisco Probate Court before retiring from the bench on March 28,
10 2009 as one of the longest-serving judges in San Francisco history; and

11 WHEREAS, John credits his wife, Ina, among those who guided and supported him,
12 opening his eyes to what could be possible; and

13 WHEREAS, Ina was born in Chicago and graduated high school at 16, receiving a
14 bachelor's degree from the College of the Pacific (now the University of the Pacific) and her
15 Master of Social Work from the University of California, Berkeley; and

16 WHEREAS, Just a few months after her marriage to John Dearman in 1961, Ina was
17 diagnosed with multiple sclerosis but would go on to survive 70 years of living with the
18 disease, recover from two kinds of cancer and a broken back with unyielding optimism,
19 discipline, and grit; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1969, Ina co-founded the Cross-Cultural Family Center, which has, for
21 55 years, provided mental health and early education services to children and families in San
22 Francisco's Western Addition, Tenderloin, Potrero Hill, Castro, Hayes Valley, Richmond
23 District and Visitacion Valley; and

24 WHEREAS, Ina also served on the YWCA's local, national, and international boards,
25 worked as a treasurer, volunteered for many local politicians running for office, and served on

1 a host of San Francisco commissions and boards, including the Planning Commission and the
2 Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board; and

3 WHEREAS, Even in her later years, with limited mobility, Ina remained committed to
4 social action and doing her part to help those around her, with one of her last projects being
5 delivering food and groceries from farmers markets to home-bound seniors with a friend, while
6 explaining to any disgruntled neighbors who complained about their double parking, their
7 mission and the importance of their work; and

8 WHEREAS, Ina was formidable, purpose-driven, thoughtful of others, unafraid to be
9 honest, and a relentless soldier for good, and shared with her husband a profound love for
10 San Francisco, a city that they called home for more than 64 years; and

11 WHEREAS, Ina died on January 24, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of justice,
12 compassion, and dedication to the welfare of her community; and

13 WHEREAS, March 28, 2026, will be John's 95th birthday, and will mark 48 years since
14 he was first appointed to the Municipal Court of San Francisco, and 16 years since he retired
15 from the bench; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco honors and remembers the
17 extraordinary contributions and achievements of John and Ina Dearman; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San
19 Francisco hereby recognizes March 28th, 2026, as John and Ina Dearman Day in recognition
20 of their dedication to advancing civil rights, justice, and equality.

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