

1 [Commemorative Street Plaque - Judith Heumann - United Nations Plaza]

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3 **Resolution authorizing the placement of a commemorative plaque or statuary in United**
4 **Nations Plaza in memory of Judith Heumann; directing the Department of Public Works**
5 **to carry out the installation of the aforementioned plaque or statuary.**
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7 WHEREAS, Judy Heumann passed away at age 75 on March 4, 2023, at her home in
8 Washington DC; and

9 WHEREAS, Judy Heumann served as the Assistant Secretary of Education for Special
10 Education and Rehabilitative Services under President Bill Clinton from 1993 to 2001, and the
11 first Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, appointed by President Barack Obama
12 in 2010; and

13 WHEREAS, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is American legislation that
14 guarantees certain rights to people with disabilities; it was one of the first U.S. federal civil
15 rights laws offering protection for people with disabilities; it set precedents for subsequent
16 legislation for people with disabilities, including the Virginians with Disabilities Act in 1985 and
17 the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990; and

18 WHEREAS, The 504 Sit-in was a disability rights protest that began April 5, 1977, in
19 Federal Buildings in multiple cities around the US, including San Francisco, by people with
20 disabilities in order to push the issuance of long-delayed regulations regarding Section 504 of
21 the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and

22 WHEREAS, The protest was organized by Judy Heumann, who was a lifelong civil
23 rights advocate for people with disabilities whose work produced significant contributions to
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1 the development of human rights legislation and policies benefiting children and adults with
2 disabilities; and

3 WHEREAS, The protest and 504 Sit-in at the Federal Building at 50 United Nations
4 Plaza were significant because they achieved the goal of prompting the Federal government
5 to issue the long awaited regulations to guarantee access and civil rights to people with
6 disabilities; and

7 WHEREAS, The most successful sit-in occurred in San Francisco at 50 United Nations
8 Plaza, at the Federal Building, planned by Judith Heumann, Kitty Cone, and Mary Jane Owen,
9 lasted until May 4, 1977, a total of 25 days, with more than 150 people, including 120 disability
10 rights activists, refusing to leave, making it the longest sit-in at a federal building to date; and

11 WHEREAS, The protesters who occupied the fourth floor of the Federal building at 50
12 United Nations Plaza were primarily young and diverse, including mostly disabled people of
13 color, and led by women, with queer women playing an especially prominent role; and

14 WHEREAS, The Black Panther Party arrived to deliver food to the protesters who
15 organized the community occupation of the building, despite the FBI attempting to stop them,
16 unsuccessfully from delivering hot meals; and

17 WHEREAS, Prior to the enactment in 1990 of the Americans with Disabilities Act was
18 the most important disability rights legislation in the US; and

19 WHEREAS, Before the passage of Section 504, disability was viewed under the law as
20 a personal deficit and responsibility; and

21 WHEREAS, Before the passage of Section 504, the American legal framework enabled
22 the treatment of people with disabilities as second-class citizens, and systematically excluded
23 them from fully participating in society; and

24 WHEREAS, The passage of Section 504 marked a recognition that progress was
25 needed in recognizing the civil rights of people with disabilities; and

1 WHEREAS, Early versions of the Act were opposed and eventually vetoed by
2 President Richard Nixon in October 1972 and March 1973; and

3 WHEREAS, Between the passage of the Act in 1973 to 1977, there were no published
4 regulations, despite protests, and pressure from disabled American activists and their allies,
5 who filed a successful lawsuit to compel the Federal government to issue the regulations; and

6 WHEREAS, Disability in Action activists, led by Judith Heumann, staged a sit in on
7 Madison Ave., New York, protesters from Paralyzed Veterans of America, the National
8 Paraplegia Foundation, and others staged demonstrations in Washington DC; and

9 WHEREAS, The regulations were finally issued and signed on April 28, 1977; now,
10 therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors, in accordance with Public Works Code,
12 Section 789, et seq., the Commemorative Street Plaque Ordinance, authorizes the placement
13 of plaques on the sidewalk at United Nations Plaza; and, be it

14 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby urges Public Works to
15 waive all costs associated with permits and the installation of the commemorative plaque;
16 and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors directs Public Works to take all
18 actions necessary to implement the intent of this Resolution, including approval of the
19 installation of the aforementioned plaque; and, be it

20 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors directs Public Works to
21 add aforementioned plaque at the aforementioned location on the City's official list of
22 commemorative sites effective immediately from the date of passage of this Resolution; and,
23 be it

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That Judith Heumann is hereby recognized by the San
2 Francisco Board of Supervisors for her significant contributions both nationally and
3 internationally to the Civil Rights and Disability Community.
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