

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that enslaved Americans in Confederate territory were free, paving the way for the passage of the 13th Amendment, which formally abolished slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, word of the Emancipation Proclamation was delayed by over two years, until June 19, 1865, when U.S. Army troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to enforce General Order Number Three, informing residents that all enslaved people were now free; and

WHEREAS, June 19th, known as "Juneteenth," has been celebrated by the Black community for more than 150 years as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and a symbol of liberation and resilience; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth celebrations have spread from the South and are now observed in states throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Washington State officially declared Juneteenth as a recognized holiday, and in 2021, it was established as an official state holiday; and

WHEREAS, Black community members including cultural groups, local churches, youth groups, and civil rights organizations have been observing Juneteenth celebrations in Thurston County for over forty years; and

WHEREAS, in June 2021, the Women of Color in Leadership Movement and Media Island International, in partnership with the City of Olympia, hosted the first Olympia Juneteenth Celebration at Rebecca Howard Park, marking a significant step in honoring Black history and culture in our community; and

WHEREAS, Rebecca Howard Park, named after Olympia's first Black businesswoman, Rebecca Howard, serves as a dedicated space to honor Black history and celebrate the future of Black presence, gathering, and belonging in our region. The park's development focuses on cultural placemaking, storytelling, and uplifting the resilience, contributions, and legacies of Black Olympians—past, present, and future; and

WHEREAS, Rebecca Howard, a successful entrepreneur in the 19th century, owned and operated the Pacific House, a legendary hotel and restaurant in Olympia. Despite the exclusionary laws of the time, she built a thriving business and became a prominent community figure, revered for her hospitality, humor, and no-nonsense demeanor; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia is honored to sponsor the Women of Color in Leadership Movement and Media Island International in hosting the community Juneteenth Celebration Festival at Rebecca Howard Park on June 21, 2025, featuring

*performances, presentations, and the Marketplace showcasing Black-owned businesses;
and*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Olympia City Council, does
hereby proclaim June 19, 2025 as*

JUNETEENTH

*in the City of Olympia, Washington, and urges all residents to join in celebration of the
significant moment in American history and its role in the heritage of our nation and city.*

SIGNED IN THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON THIS 17th DAY OF June 2025.

OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL

***Dontae Payne
Mayor***