

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, in February, the United States recognizes and reflects on the sacrifices, contributions, and achievements made by generations of African Americans in the storied history of our nation and acknowledges the ongoing struggle to keep America's founding promise of a more perfect and more equal union; and

WHEREAS, the African American experience is woven into the historical fabric of the Pacific Northwest: from York's full membership in the Lewis and Clark Expedition, through the first African American pioneer in the Northwest, George W. Bush, who established Bush Prairie, now known as our neighbor, the City of Tumwater, and on through today; and

WHEREAS, the history of the City of Olympia would be far less rich and diverse without the contributions of Olympia's African American residents – such as Rebecca Howard, the beloved 19th Century entrepreneur, who owned and managed the popular Pacific House in downtown Olympia; and

WHEREAS, today 3 percent of Olympia's population is Black or African American. Of the 9,000 new Olympia residents added between 2010-2020, 11 percent were Black or African American which suggests increasing population over time; and

WHEREAS, in 1915, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, noted black scholar and son of formerly enslaved people, founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, and initiated Black History Week on February 12, 1926; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, Black History Week was expanded and became established as Black History Month, and is now celebrated all over North America; and

WHEREAS, the observance of Black History Month demands our attention to the continued need to dismantle racism and build a community that lives up to its democratic ideals; and

WHEREAS, our community acknowledges the systemic racism perpetuated by individuals and our nation's government through slavery, segregation, mass-incarceration, police brutality, and economic disparity; and

WHEREAS, African Americans have countless achievements despite these past and present cruelties; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia proudly embraces the cultural diversity of our community, and honors organizations, families, and individuals of African American descent in appreciation of their invaluable contributions that continue to enrich the history and culture of our city, and unite and sustain us as a community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia is honored to partner with the Hawk Foundation for Research and Education in African Culture and the Olympia School District to host a series of three public events that explore and celebrate Black History during February 2023; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Olympia City Council does hereby proclaim the month of February 2023 as

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

in the City of Olympia and encourage all Olympians to recognize and honor the African American experience and work toward a nation where all people have equal opportunity to thrive.

***SIGNED IN THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON THIS
SEVENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2023.***

OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL

***Cheryl Selby
Mayor***