

2018 RES-548
RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2019 AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WHEREAS, Black History Month provides a deliberate opportunity to reflect on the common humanity underlying all people and to raise awareness and foster respect for the heritage and contributions of people of African descent; and

WHEREAS, this year marks 400 years since the arrival of enslaved Africans in Virginia. The existence of Africans in North America can be traced back to 1525, and through 1866 the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is estimated to have ensnared more than 12 million African people, with an estimated 10 million surviving the unconscionable Middle Passage, landing in North America, the Caribbean, and South America; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin history first references African descendants in a speech given in 1725 by a chief of the Illinois Indians, in which he said "a negro belonging to Monsieur de Boisbriant" at Green Bay; and

WHEREAS, the United States has recognized black history annually since February 12, 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month," by noted Harvard scholar and historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson, celebrating the ethnic and racial diversity that enriches and strengthens our nation; and

WHEREAS, both enslaved and free people of African descent have participated in every aspect of America's effort to secure, protect, and advance the cause of freedom and civil rights and have stories that are an inspiration to all citizens, that reflect the triumph of the human spirit and offer the hopes of everyday people to rise above both prejudice and circumstance and to build lives of dignity; and

WHEREAS, people of African descent or African Americans have made measurable differences in their respective industries; in Dane County, many have made their mark, including, but not limited to:

Milele Chikasa Anana — Publisher, UMOJA Magazine, a monthly journal of positive, encouraging news about African American people and opportunities in Madison, a civil rights activist, business leader, and former city of Madison affirmative action officer, and the first African American elected to the Madison school board;

Dr. Reuben Anthony – President/CEO of Urban League of Greater Madison;

Reverend Joseph Baring - pastor of St. Paul AME Church and the AME's district director of social action;

Lisa Peyton Caire — Founded the Foundation for Black Women's Wellness, a Wisconsin-based nonprofit organization committed to eliminating health disparities and other barriers impacting the lives of African American women and girls;

James "Jim" Caldwell – Beloit native, NFL coach (Indianapolis Colts from 2009-2011 leading the team to the playoffs four times, Detroit Lions 2014-2017);

Dawn Crim – Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services and member of the Edgewood Board of Trustees and Madison Foundation Board of Trustees;

Clifton Lareece Gaines - former professional basketball player, who played at Madison West High School, and is current assistant coach at Eastern Kentucky University;

Dr. Alex Gee — Pastor, author, pioneered the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development, developing and mobilizing emerging African American leaders;

Dr. Richard Harris – President/CEO Genesis Social Services and author of Growing Up Black in South Madison;

Judge Paul Higginbotham – Former Judge of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, first and only African American to serve on the court;

Linda Hoskins – 52 years as a long-time community activist, former President of NAACP, Founder of Bridge Lake Point Neighborhood Association;

Frances Huntley-Cooper – Wisconsin's first and only African American mayor elected to office; served as mayor of Fitchburg, WI;

Gregg Jones – President, Dane County NAACP;

Gloria Ladson-Billings - American pedagogical theorist and teacher educator on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Education, and current Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, known for her work in the fields of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical race theory;

Vanessa McDowell – First African American President/CEO of the YWCA Madison;

District Attorney Ismael Ozanne – First African American District Attorney in Wisconsin, currently serving as Dane County's District Attorney;

Vel Phillips – First Black Wisconsin Secretary of State;

Dr. Floyd Rose – President of 100 Black Men, President of the Wisconsin Supplier Development Council;

Carolyn Stanford Taylor — Wisconsin's first African American State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction; and

WHEREAS, the list of people of African descent or African Americans of note who have a Wisconsin connection is long and impressive, including Lucien H. Palmer, Le Roy J. Simmons, George Edwin Taylor, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Violette Neatly Anderson, the Oshkosh 94, Eric Von, Arthur Jones, Reggie Jackson, Milele Cogg, Colin Kaepernick, Gerard Randall, James Causey, Curtiss Harris, Satchel Paige, Condoleezza Rice, Reuben Harpole Jr., Mark Wade Sr., Chandra Cooper, Kevin Newell, Rev. Greg Lewis, Marques Johnson, Marcia Anderson, Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes, and Phil Cockroft; and

WHEREAS, while acknowledging the work of these leaders, it is equally critical to appreciate, both past and present, the long list of contributions of our fellow residents, Black History Month gives Wisconsinites an occasion to recognize the significant influence people of African heritage have made, and continue to make, in the areas of medicine, art, politics, human rights, education, sports, and economic development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Dane County Board of Supervisors recognizes February 2019 as Black History Month and extends appreciation to the above-named persons for their contributions to Dane County, the state of Wisconsin, the country, and their fellow residents.