



CITY OF KIRKLAND
City Manager's Office
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager
From: Chelsea Zibolsky, Special Projects Coordinator
Date: February 4, 2021
Subject: Black History Month Proclamation

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mayor proclaim February 2021 as Black History Month in the City of Kirkland.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

"Negro History Week" was founded in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a noted American historian, author, journalist, and son of enslaved people of African descent. To encourage the study of Black history and preserve and honor that legacy, Dr. Woodson selected the second week of February for this observance. This time of celebration and reflection was broadened to Black History Month at Kent State University in February of 1970, and nationally recognized in 1976 by President Gerald Ford during the United States Bicentennial.

During Black History Month, we celebrate the extraordinary achievements and contributions made by Black people to the social, artistic, cultural, political, economic, spiritual, and national advancement in the United States and beyond. The respected leader, abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass, who was also the very first Black person to hold a government position, once said, "The destiny of the colored American...is the destiny of America;" and although we inherit incredible progress secured at the expense of centuries of toil, blood, sweat and tears, we acknowledge that the long journey toward justice is a difficult one to navigate.

To learn more about the exceptional contributions of Black Americans, Kirkland residents, students and businesses may visit the [National Museum of African American History & Culture](#) website. The Museum has [virtual exhibitions](#), [online collections](#), and an [active blog](#) of stories and articles.

The City of Kirkland is undertaking proactive measures through the City Council's adoption of Resolution R-5434 on August 4, 2020 to demonstrate deliberate and intentional efforts to center the experiences and perspectives of Black people as we chart a path forward toward a shared community. The work of R-5434 builds on the City Council's adoption of Resolution R-5240 on February 21, 2017 declaring Kirkland as a safe, welcoming and inclusive city for all people.

The City is taking various actions to engage the community on how it can end structural racism in Kirkland during the month of February and beyond, including the [Virtual Community Conversation about Racial Justice](#) on February 4, a City Council study session on February 16 updating the community on several actions related to R-5434, and the [KirklandTalks: 2021 Dialogue Series on Race and Racism](#), an interactive session featuring structured dialogues on race and racism. Throughout the month, the City will also be posting to social media various stories featuring local Black leaders to help raise awareness in our community.

By proclaiming the month of February 2021 as Black History Month in Kirkland, all residents are invited to join us in commemorating the countless contributions of Black people to our region, our nation and the world, as well as facing the reality of institutional racism in our community. The City encourages all Kirkland community members to join in our conversations, both this month and all year. By coming together, we can create the "beloved community" envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Recognizing February 2021 as Black History Month

WHEREAS, “Negro History Week” was founded in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a noted American historian, author, journalist, and son of enslaved people of African descent; and

WHEREAS, to encourage the study of Black history and preserve and honor that legacy, Dr. Woodson selected the second week of February for this observance; and

WHEREAS, this time of celebration and reflection was broadened to Black History Month at Kent State University in February of 1970, and nationally recognized in 1976 by President Gerald Ford during the United States Bicentennial; and

WHEREAS, during Black History Month, we celebrate the extraordinary achievements and contributions made by Black people to the social, artistic, cultural, political, economic, spiritual, and national advancement in the United States and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the respected leader, abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass, the very first Black person to hold a government position, once said, “The destiny of the colored American...is the destiny of America;” and

WHEREAS, although we inherit incredible progress secured at the expense of centuries of toil, blood, sweat and tears, we acknowledge that the long journey toward justice is a difficult one to navigate and we must forever support changemakers, become active participants in the liberation of all people and demand that leaders everywhere be held accountable; and

WHEREAS, the City of Kirkland is undertaking proactive measures through the City Council’s adoption of Resolution R-5434 on August 4, 2020 to demonstrate deliberate and intentional efforts to center the experiences and perspectives of Black people as we chart a path forward toward a shared community; and

WHEREAS, these measures build on the City Council’s adoption of Resolution R-5240 on February 21, 2017 declaring Kirkland as a safe, welcoming and inclusive city for all people; and

WHEREAS, knowledge is our strongest tool against injustice, and it is our responsibility to prepare and empower every child in America, regardless of skin color, to learn the full and complete history of our nation; and

WHEREAS, we celebrate the historic victory of Vice President Kamala Devi Harris as the first woman, first Black person and first person of Asian American descent elected Vice President of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, to learn more about the exceptional contributions of Black Americans, visit the [National Museum of African American History & Culture](#) website, which has [virtual exhibitions](#), [online collections](#), and an [active blog](#) of stories and articles; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Penny Sweet, Mayor of Kirkland, proclaim the month of February 2021 as Black History Month in Kirkland and ask all community members, public officials, librarians, and educators to join us in commemorating the countless contributions of Black people to our region, our nation and the world, as well as facing the reality of institutional racism in our community. We encourage all Kirkland community members to join us in our conversations, both this month and all year. By coming together, we can create the beloved community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Signed this 2nd day of February 2021

Penny Sweet, Mayor