

PROCLAMATION
RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2025 AS
BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH
IN THE CITY OF HERCULES

WHEREAS, National African American History Month had its origins in 1915 when historian and author, Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the organization known today as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. In 1926, the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired Dr. Woodson to dedicate the second week in February as Negro History Week for recognizing and celebrating the significance of Black Americans. In 1976 the commemoration was expanded to a month-long observance to Black History Month. President Ford issued a message urging fellow citizens to join in tribute to Black History Month and to the message of courage and perseverance it brings to all of us. In 1986, Congress passed Public Law 99-244 designating February as National Black History Month in 1986; and

WHEREAS, observing Black History Month provides opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of African Americans and their role in shaping history and acknowledge the centuries of struggles for equality and freedom. In 1619, the first documented enslaved Africans arrived at the English colonies at Old Point Comfort, Virginia, on the English ships *White Lion* and *Treasurer*, where these individuals were sold in exchange for provisions, while others were transported to Jamestown where they were sold; and

WHEREAS, between 1863 and 1865, hundreds of Black men fought in the American Civil War and died as enlisted men in the United States Colored Troops, seeking life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as a free people. After 1865, and the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, the complete freedom and civil rights granted to previously enslaved men, women, and children was subverted by brutal Jim Crow laws, preventing their ability to live as fully free citizens and pursue life, liberty and happiness as guaranteed to white citizens; and

WHEREAS, between 1954 and 1968, African American activists, in particular women, spearheaded the Civil Rights Movement, fought for social justice, constitutional rights, organized sit-ins, workshops, boycotts, and grassroots campaigns. Attacks on the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments continue to persist in the 21st century for African Americans and the City of Hercules devotes its resources to fulfilling the promises of the Emancipation Proclamation and the U.S. Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Black History Month also celebrates the achievements of African Americans and their role in shaping history along with the contributions that African Americans have made to enhance the economic, cultural, spiritual and political development of our Country. The social awareness of Black history is vital to fulfilling our growth and development as a community, state, and Nation. We celebrate the contributions of Black Americans, honor the legacies and achievements of past generations and confront injustices that remain today. Such knowledge can nourish perception for all citizens concerning the issues of civil rights, the progress that has been made to eliminate barriers for all minorities, and the continuing struggle against racial discrimination.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dion Bailey, Mayor of the City of Hercules, on behalf of the entire City Council do hereby recognize February 2025 as Black History Month in our City of Hercules, and I call this observance to the attention of the City of Hercules and all our citizens to join with the nation in celebrating National Black History Month. All citizens are encouraged to reflect on the rich history of African Americans to salute and bear witness to and celebrate the progress, beauty, and achievements they have made throughout society and recognize their central role in U.S. history.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the City of Hercules to be affixed this twenty-eighth day of January 2025.

Dion Bailey, Mayor