

# DENVER CITY COUNCIL



## **Proclamation No. 25-2082 Recognizing the Legacy of Denver's 1st Black Mayor**

**Whereas**, Wellington Edward Webb was sworn in on July 1, 1991, by Colorado Chief Justice Luis Rovira as Denver's 42nd Mayor and its first Black Mayor. His journey to Denver's highest civic office was remarkable and worthy of recognition; and

**Whereas** Webb served three terms in the Colorado House of Representatives (1972–1977), where he was elected Democratic Caucus Chairman and chaired the House Health, Environmental, Welfare, and Institutions Committee. He sponsored landmark legislation prohibiting discrimination based on marital status, disability, and sexual orientation, and required group health insurance to cover alcohol addiction treatment. He also advanced laws for women's credit rights and adult adoptees seeking birth records; and

**Whereas** President Jimmy Carter appointed Webb Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (later Health and Human Services), overseeing six states and 23 Native American reservations. He identified inequities in tribal funding and advocated reforms; and

**Whereas** Governor Richard Lamm appointed Webb Executive Director of Colorado's Department of Regulatory Agencies in 1981, where he strengthened ethics, safety, and consumer protections across twelve divisions. He was honored as Public Official of the Year by the National Governors Association; and

**Whereas** Webb was elected Denver Auditor in 1987, enforcing prevailing wage laws, implementing prompt vendor payments, and challenging inequitable financial agreements. Despite polling at only 7% in his mayoral campaign, Webb walked the city for 42 days, staying in homes across Denver. He won with 58% of the vote and later served three terms, leaving office with a 65% approval rating. He was elected President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Conference of Democratic Mayors, and National Conference of Black Mayors, and served as Vice-Chair of the Democratic National Committee and U.S. Delegate to the United Nations; and

**Whereas** under his administration, crime dropped 40%, new police stations were built, youth curfews and job programs were implemented, and the Mayor's Office for Children and Education was established; and

**Whereas** Webb oversaw 85% of Denver International Airport's construction, secured United Airlines as its first tenant, expanded international flights, and achieved one of the nation's highest minority business participation rates; and



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## Proclamation No. 25-2082 Recognizing the Legacy of Denver's 1st Black Mayor (Continued)

**Whereas** his administration expanded Denver's open space by 97%, restored Red Rocks Amphitheater, built Commons Park, and developed numerous recreation centers, parks, and cultural facilities including the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library and the Martin Luther King Jr. "I Have a Dream" Monument; and

**Whereas** Webb created Denver Health as an independent authority, turning a \$39 million deficit into a \$50 million surplus, enabling major hospital expansions. He led redevelopment of Stapleton Airport and Lowry Air Force Base into sustainable communities, expanded the Denver Public Library and Art Museum, and launched programs for public health, education, and the arts; and

**Whereas** Webb appointed Denver's first LGBTQ+, Asian American, and African American women judges, hosted World Youth Day with Pope John Paul II, the 1997 Summit of the Eight, and championship celebrations for the Broncos and Avalanche; and

**Whereas** he received numerous honors, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors Distinguished Public Service Award, the National Wildlife Federation Achievement Award, the Stockholm Partnership Award for Sustainability, and France's Legion of Honor. Denver named the Wellington E. Webb Building and the Webb Center for Primary Care in his honor; and

**Whereas** Mayor Wellington Webb has led an honorable career as a public servant, with accomplishments too numerous to list in full detail here. This proclamation recognizes that his leadership, and his legacy will live on, continuing to shape the future of Denver and the State of Colorado for many generations to come

### **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:**

**Section 1.** That the Denver City Council honors and recognizes Mayor Wellington Webb and his administration for the visionary leadership, historic accomplishments, and enduring contributions to the City and County of Denver as dedicated and transformative public servants

**Section 2.** That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to The Honorable Wellington Webb.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL DECEMBER 15, 2025

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PRESIDENT

