



Proclamation No. 24-0257

Recognizing Black History Month and Community Commitment to Collaborative Progress

WHEREAS, Denver is a city made up of many people from many diverse backgrounds who have had to overcome legal discrimination and violent subjugation to build a community united in continuing the course to equity while celebrating the successes made; and

WHEREAS, The Denver City Council honors and acknowledges each week that the land on which we reside is the traditional territory of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Peoples, recognizing the 48 contemporary tribal nations that are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Since the atrocities committed on November 29, 1864, the Sand Creek Massacre remains a reminder of one of the most emotionally charged and controversial events in American history, a tragedy reflective of its time and place in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, The City and County of Denver indeed celebrates a rich cultural history within its Black community, epitomized by vibrant neighborhoods like Five Points, affectionately dubbed the "Harlem of the West," it's essential to acknowledge the profound harm inflicted upon Black individuals throughout the city's history. Despite the cultural richness and resilience demonstrated by Black communities, they have endured systemic racism, discrimination, and marginalization at the hands of both institutional structures and societal prejudices; and

WHEREAS, in the City and County of Denver, the Black population has faced a legacy of systemic oppression, from the era of segregation and redlining that restricted access to housing and economic opportunities and the erasure and exploitation of Black culture and labor have been pervasive, with contributes often overlooked or appropriated without proper acknowledgement or compensation; and

WHEREAS, The City and County of Denver recognizes our difficult history with the Klu Klux Klan, who had a powerful presence from our State House to Denver's Council Chambers in shaping early discriminatory policy in our City's foundations; and

WHEREAS, Chicanos/Latinos have called Colorado and Denver home for generations before there was a United States and the pre-colonization of indigenous ancestors who birthed national consciousness of the Chicano Movement, including the 221-day strike at the Kitayama Carnation Farm, Denver's West High School walkout, and the Denver Chicano Youth Liberation Conference; and

WHEREAS, Denver's Asian American and Pacific Islander community has a long, celebrated history in Denver, the Vietnamese community's important presence in the City, including their leadership in the establishment of The Far East Center, which has been placed on the State's Register of Historic Buildings, the Chinese community's successes in constructing Denver's historic Chinatown, before a mob destroyed businesses, residences, and killed one Chinese resident; the Japanese community's preservation of Sakura Square, home to Denver's annual Cherry Blossom Festival and the Tri-State Buddhist Temple; and that many of the Japanese-Americans currently living in Denver are direct descendants of America's shameful history of Japanese internment at Amache Incarceration; and

WHEREAS, xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment continues to impact newcomers to Denver, whether they are Latino, Asian, South Asian, Arab, or African; and

WHEREAS, the movement for LGBTQ rights and liberation has always built upon, learned from, and intersected with the Civil Rights Movement, including what was called the Gay Revolt at Denver City Council in 1973 where 350 protesters came to a City Council meeting, 35 people testified for three hours to address unfair treatment of their community by the police, and in the next month City Council repealed four ordinances targeting the community; and

WHEREAS, Denver, as a birthplace of the Americans with Disabilities Act via the activism of the Gang of 19 in 1978, recognizes that grassroots advocacy by civil rights groups leads to material policy change for marginalized groups; and

WHEREAS, Denver's faith communities, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, and Hindu have often banded together in the pursuit of racial justice and civil rights; and

WHEREAS, Communities of color are united in confronting white supremacy by emphasizing the similar forms of oppression black and brown people, including shared experiences of subjugation; and

WHEREAS, The City Council of Denver remembers Denver's own Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales was personally asked by Dr. Martin Luther King to lead the Southwest Contingency for the Poor Peoples March on D.C. in 1968 cementing the strength we gain when we unify and we call on the people of Denver to remember the words Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote to César Chávez, "Our separate struggles are really one."

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. The City Council of Denver recognizes February 2024 as Black History Month to celebrate all Black Denverites, their sacrifices, their struggles, and their achievements that have added to the health and wealth of our city today, and the progress made to create a more just society.

Section 2. The City Council of Denver recognizes that marginalized groups should stand unified with the Black community, honoring the cultures and contributions of Indigenous, Latino, Arab and Asian Americans in pursuit of a more just society.

Section 3. The City Council of Denver recognizes the need to uplift all marginalized and downtrodden communities by addressing the structural and institutional barriers that prevent everyone from having an opportunity to life, liberty and the pursuit of justice.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL February 26, 2024

PRESIDENT