

# DENVER CITY COUNCIL



## Proclamation



Proclamation No. 25-2046

Recognizing the Legacy of the Honorable Hiawatha Davis Jr.

**WHEREAS**, the Honorable Hiawatha Davis Jr. was a proud son of Colorado, a graduate of Manual High School, and a student at the University of Colorado Boulder. He was a lifelong fighter for the people, living out the words of Frederick Douglass: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress.;" and

**WHEREAS**, Hiawatha Davis Jr. stood tall as a fearless leader in Denver's Black community and a relentless advocate for civil rights—championing the voices of seniors, women, people with disabilities, and all those pushed to the margins; and

**WHEREAS**, Hiawatha Davis Jr. was elected to represent District 8 on the Denver City Council in 1983, where he served with distinction until 1999, always putting the needs of his community first; and

**WHEREAS**, Hiawatha Davis Jr. helped build lasting systems of accountability and justice, including the creation of the Police Review Commission and the Public Nuisance Ordinance, and served as acting executive director of the Denver Housing Authority in 1990; and

**WHEREAS**, Hiawatha Davis Jr. uplifted families through social programs, including vital support for grandparents raising grandchildren, showing his deep belief in the strength and resilience of Black families; and

**WHEREAS**, Hiawatha Davis Jr. never wavered in his convictions. He resisted the Vietnam War draft as a matter of principle, served time in federal prison, and was later pardoned by President Gerald Ford. His courage and integrity earned him the Barney Ford Community Service Award for Human Rights and the Outstanding Community Service Award from Black Educators United; and

**WHEREAS**, Hiawatha Davis Jr. continued his service as director of Mayor Wellington Webb's Office of Human Rights and Community Relations until his passing in 2000, always standing up for justice and equity; and

**WHEREAS**, in honor of his legacy, the Skyland Recreation Center was renamed the Hiawatha Davis Jr. Recreation Center, and he was posthumously recognized at the Unsung Heroes Awards by Mayor Webb; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1983, Hiawatha Davis Jr. founded an annual luncheon to celebrate and support the elders of Northeast Denver, connecting them to resources and honoring their wisdom; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2000, former Denver City Council member Elbra Wedgeworth renamed the event, the Hiawatha Davis Jr. Luncheon to carry forward his legacy. This year, on December 13, 2025, the luncheon celebrates its 42nd gathering; and

**WHEREAS**, the legacy of Hiawatha Davis Jr. is woven into the fabric of Northeast Denver. His life is a blueprint for public service, Black excellence, and community power—a legacy that continues to inspire generations of leaders.

**Section 1.** That the Denver City Council formally recognizes the legacy of Hiawatha Davis Jr. and his contribution to the City of Denver.

**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 Betty Davis.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL December 8, 2025

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PRESIDENT

