



Proclamation



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WHEREAS, Black History Month grew out of Negro History Week, which was established in 1926 by historian Carter G. Woodson of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History; and in the earliest observances of Negro History Week, Dr. Woodson reported that North Carolina was among a small number of states whose departments of education “sent out to their teachers special appeals for cooperation in this important celebration”; and

WHEREAS, Black people have played and continue to play significant roles in Carrboro’s economic, cultural, spiritual, and political development; and

WHEREAS, Black leaders in Carrboro have included several elected officials, including Alderman Braxton Foushee, Carrboro’s first Black elected official, who served from 1969 to 1981; Robert Drakeford, who served as alderman from 1975 to 1977 and as mayor from 1977 to 1983; Alderman Hilliard Caldwell, who served from 1981 to 1997; Alderman Henry “Hank” Anderson III, who served from 1993 to 1998; Alderman Joal Hall Broun, who served from 1999 to 2011 and currently serves as a district court judge for Orange and Chatham Counties; Alderman Michelle Johnson, who served from 2011 to 2017; and Council Member Barbara Foushee, who has served since 2017; and

WHEREAS, Black people have played leadership roles as employees of the Town of Carrboro, including Richard Knight, Jr, who was the first Black person to serve as town manager from 1976 to 1980 and later became the first Black city manager of the City of Dallas, Texas; and Richard J. White, III, who has served as town manager since 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Carrboro Community Park was renamed the Henry Anderson III Park in honor of the late Alderman Hank Anderson; Baldwin Park was named for Henry W. Baldwin, a local Black community member and landowner; and Martin Luther King, Jr Park, which opened in 2020, features murals and plaques that honor Dr. King’s life and legacy; and

WHEREAS, the Town is proud to recognize and celebrate Black people and Black history in Carrboro and across the nation during Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, the Town is committed to advancing racial equity and has recently taken several actions in support of this commitment, including:

- joining the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) in 2018, and in 2019 establishing a Racial Equity Core Team of employees who are leading the way toward equitable systems change across the organization;
- unveiling “truth plaques” at Town Hall and on the site of the former Freedmen’s School on East Main Street to acknowledge the ties of the Town’s namesake to racial segregation and other truths about Carrboro’s history;

- adopting a resolution in June 2020 to advance racial equity in law enforcement and public safety in Carrboro;
- adopting a resolution in support of reparations for Black Carrboro in October 2020;
- providing racial equity training for Town employees beginning in January 2021 and for members of the Town’s advisory boards and commissions beginning in June 2021;
- establishing the Racial Equity Commission in January 2021;
- establishing the Community Safety Task Force in April 2021; and
- collaborating with the other jurisdictions in Orange County to develop the One Orange Racial Equity Framework; and
- adopting the Carrboro Connects 2022-2042 Comprehensive Plan with race and equity as a foundational theme; and
- including funds in the fiscal year 2023 budget to conduct a disparity study that will inform changes to the Town's procurement policies to increase opportunities for minority- and women-owned business enterprises; and

WHEREAS, local celebrations of Black History Month this year will include a Black History Month Concert Series; a performance of the one-woman stage play *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman*; a history lecture, “Black Resistance,” focusing on the Freedmen’s Conventions, part of an ongoing event series titled *Celebrating Black People in America*; and a poets’ open mic held via Zoom; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the scheduled events, the Town will host a month-long youth art exhibit on the Carrboro Recreation, Parks & Cultural Resources Department’s website, 28 days of Black history trivia, and inspiring quotes, all shared via the Town’s social media channels; and

WHEREAS, numerous other celebrations of Black History Month will occur around the Triangle, a listing of which can be viewed at <https://triangleonthecheap.com/black-history-month/>; and

WHEREAS, in May and June of this year, the Town will again partner with the Music Maker Foundation to host the Freight Train Blues concert series in celebration of local music legend and Grammy Award recipient Elizabeth Cotten;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Damon Seils, mayor of the Town of Carrboro, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim February 2023 as Black History Month in Carrboro and encourage all residents to participate in local Black History Month events and to learn about and celebrate the lives, history, and contributions of Black people during this month and throughout the year.

This the 31st day of January, 2023.



Damon Seil

Damon Seils, Mayor