

ADDENDUM MATERIAL

DATE 2-15-22 ITEM NO. ADD 1

Black History Month Proclamation

Dr. Cheree Meeks, NAACP Tucson, President
2.15.2022

To the Pima County Board of Supervisors, thank you for your leadership and acknowledgement of Black History Month. I would like to especially thank Supervisor Adelita Grijalva for her continued support.

My name is Cheree Meeks and I serve as the President of NAACP Tucson. I also serve as Assistant Dean for Programs, Diversity, and Inclusion in the W.A. Franke Honors College at the University of Arizona. It is an honor to accept this Proclamation.

The first Negro History Week was established in 1926 by historian and scholar, Dr. Carter G Woodson. It was in 1976 that President Gerald Ford officially recognized the month of February as Black History Month. Although the shortest month of the year, February was intentionally selected because of the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Today is special because we celebrate Black History Month in Pima County!

The 2022 Black History Month national theme is *Black Health and Wellness*. It is important that we acknowledge the health and wellness of the Black community. As we celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of Black Americans, let us not forget the struggles. Black lives, the Black community, and Black experience have not always been celebrated. Black Americans have endured centuries of hate, discrimination, trauma, and oppression. Unfortunately, the generational impact of hate and discrimination lives on. We see it across the country in the interactions that Black people have with law enforcement. In far too many cases, Black people lose their lives at the hands of those who pledged to protect and serve. The Black community experiences significant disparities – in education, employment, housing, health care, in political power, and in the criminal justice system. Racist anti-democratic voter suppression laws are impacting voters across the country. It will impact us locally.

The NAACP is an organization that was founded in 1909 nationally and we have been advocates for the elimination of race-based discrimination in Tucson since 1919. The NAACP understands the collective power of the Black community and strives to ingrain this into everything we do, from fighting voter suppression and challenging inequality to uplifting and investing in our communities.

I would like to publicly thank the Board of Supervisors for supporting our Bail Reform Initiative.

I lift up the names of a few of our local leaders – Donna Liggins, Doris Snowden, Clarence Boykins, Sam Newsome, Pastor Grady Scott.

Without Black history, we miss the fullness of American history. Black Americans have propelled our country forward in every chapter of our nation's story. Black history is made every day. Although we designate this month as Black History Month, do not be confined to celebrating, honoring, and uplifting the experiences of Black American to the short month of February. Teach Black history – the accomplishments and stories of triumph, but the full history, which sadly includes oppression, discrimination, and trauma experienced by Black Americans.

There is still much hard work to be done, and so much history yet to learn from, to be made and to be celebrated.

Thank you for this Proclamation: Black History Month in Pima County!

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