

# *Proclamation*

## *Board of Commissioners for Washington County*

### **A PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF JUNETEENTH 2021**

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth is often referred to as our country's second independence day and has long been celebrated among the African American community, its historical significance has largely been omitted from educational curricula, making it relatively unknown to the wider population, and

**WHEREAS**, despite the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln and passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment by the U.S. Congress, more than 250,000 enslaved Africans and their descendants remained in bondage in the State of Texas until the arrival of Union troops at Galveston on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of June, 1865; and

**WHEREAS**, when the news of their emancipation spread, following the reading of "General Order Number Three" by Major General Gordon Granger, the formerly enslaved people of Texas reacted with joyous celebrations, launching what would become an annual event known as Juneteenth; and

**WHEREAS**, early celebrations of Juneteenth consisted of family and community gatherings filled not only with special food and festivities but also prayer, reflection and respect for ancestors who suffered under slavery; and

**WHEREAS** the observance of Juneteenth evolved over time, leading up to January 1, 1980 when Texas became the first state in the nation to formally establish Juneteenth as an official holiday, thanks to the tireless efforts of the late, former State Representative Al Edwards, who served for more than 30 years in the Texas State Legislature; and

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth celebrations continue to grow within communities and organizations throughout the country, helping to promote knowledge and appreciation of African American history, resilience, family, community and culture; and

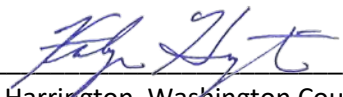
**WHEREAS**, we honor the legacy of those who first received the news on that unforgettable day in Galveston and understand that the joy reflected in the celebration of Juneteenth provides a salve and a buffer against the generational trauma of slavery and widespread systemic racism that limits Black prosperity and health to this day; and

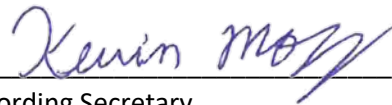
**WHEREAS**, we pledge to continue our efforts to lift up the importance and history of Juneteenth and work tirelessly to root out institutional racism wherever it exists and advance equity and inclusion for all members of our community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Washington County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim Saturday, June 19, 2021 as Juneteenth in Washington County and encourage all

community members to observe this day with activities and reflections that celebrate freedom and justice for all people.



  
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Kathryn Harrington, Washington County Board Chair

  
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Recording Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_ **21-161** \_\_\_\_\_  
Minute Order