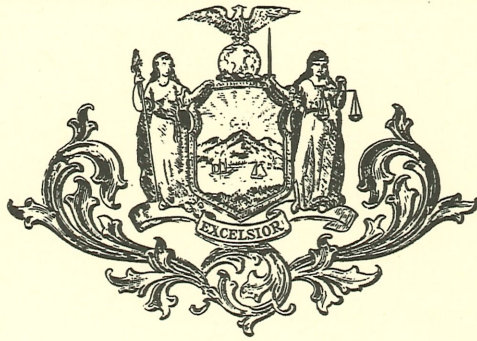


Proclamation

Whereas, New Yorkers are proud to share in meaningful observances that honor the heritage of our state and nation's diverse communities, and the month of February 2021 brings the 95th commemoration of Black History Month along with opportunities to deepen our appreciation for the social, cultural, and intellectual contributions of Black Americans to all areas of our lives and recognize the rich legacy of countless Black people who have helped shape our country in vastly profound ways; and

Whereas, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) was founded in 1915 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the noted Black historian, author, and journalist who, in 1926, established the first Negro History Week, which fifty years later – in 1976 – was expanded into the current month-long celebration that is supported and celebrated both nationally and internationally; and

Whereas, the ASALH has designated the theme, "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity," for this year's observance of Black History Month, in a call for reflection on the Black family as a vital unit in our society and as a subject of study within many disciplines – history, literature, the visual arts and film studies, sociology, anthropology, and social policy – examining the various perspectives in which the Black family has been depicted from the earliest days of enslavement to modern contemporary times; and

Whereas, the Black family in America has various ancestral origins, and the many family reunions and genetic-ancestry searches are a testament to the dispersion of family members across the United States, and other nations and continents; the Black diaspora brought hundreds of thousands to our shores and empowered enslaved Blacks by reinforcing their shared ancestral roots and inspiring the development of individual talent, intellectual pursuits, artistry, and social activism that have impacted people everywhere; and

Whereas, throughout our nation, the experience of the Black family is unique and provides a foundation of unity upon which the Black community stands; we value and appreciate the role of the greater Black community and understand the importance of resources that provide education and knowledge to younger generations, economic and employment opportunities, racial equality, social justice, and quality healthcare for Black individuals and families; and

Whereas, as the early epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, New York State has endured many challenges, and one of the most critical lessons learned is that the disease has disproportionately impacted communities of color already facing many health disparities; the coronavirus has killed Black people in this country at twice the level of white people, with the infection rate being 2.5 times higher and the hospitalization rate among Black patients over three times higher than white patients; we are committed to fighting for those who have borne the worst of the pandemic and to ensuring the fair and equitable distribution of the vaccine among our Black communities, in order to protect the health of all our Black families; and

Whereas, the legacy of the Black community endures as a foundation on which our country stands, and Black history reflects the strength and resolve of past, present, and future leaders; the Black family remains a fundamental unit for change and progress in today's society and continues to have a profound impact upon New York State, contributing significantly to our social, cultural, and political landscape, and we honor our Black families that shine as examples of pride and courage for us all;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim February 2021 as

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-fifth day of January in the year two thousand twenty-one.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor
Melissa DeRosa