



2019 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 134

February 11, 2020 - Introduced by Representatives L. MYERS, CROWLEY, FIELDS, BOWEN, HAYWOOD, STUBBS, CABRERA, HEBL, KOLSTE, STEINEKE, SARGENT, EMERSON, GRUSZYNSKI, ZAMARRIPA, VRUWINK, POPE, VINING, ALLEN, HORLACHER, SHANKLAND, MILROY, BILLINGS, HINTZ, SINICKI, ANDERSON, C. TAYLOR, JAMES, NEUBAUER, DUCHOW, SUBECK, SPREITZER, HESSELBEIN, DOYLE, THIESFELDT, RAMTHUN, CONSIDINE, BROSTOFF, KURTZ and OHNSTAD, cosponsored by Senators L. TAYLOR, JOHNSON, CARPENTER, SCHACHTNER, KOOYENGA, RISSER, SHILLING, LARSON, BEWLEY, RINGHAND, MILLER, ERPENBACH and WIRCH. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** proclaiming February 2020 as Black History Month.

2 Whereas, Black History Month provides a deliberate opportunity to reflect on
3 the common humanity underlying all people and to raise awareness and foster
4 respect for the heritage and contributions of people of African descent; and

5 Whereas, African Americans have been living and working in Wisconsin since
6 the 18th century, and records of their baptisms, marriages, and burials indicate that
7 they were woven into the fabric of early life in the state; and

8 Whereas, Wisconsin history first references African descendants in a speech
9 given in 1725 by a chief of the Illinois Indians, in which he said “a negro belonging
10 to Monsieur de Boisbriant” at Green Bay; and

11 Whereas, the United States has recognized black history annually since
12 February 12, 1926, first as “Negro History Week” and later as “Black History Month,”
13 by noted Harvard scholar and historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson, celebrating the
14 ethnic and racial diversity that enriches and strengthens our nation; and

1 Whereas, both enslaved and free people of African descent have participated in
2 every aspect of America's effort to secure, protect, and advance the cause of freedom
3 and civil rights and have stories that are an inspiration to all citizens, that reflect
4 the triumph of the human spirit and offer the hopes of everyday people to rise above
5 both prejudice and circumstance and to build lives of dignity; and

6 Whereas, people of African descent have made measurable differences in their
7 respective industries, people such as:

8 • PFC Anna Mae Robertson—member of the 6888th Central Postal Directory
9 Battalion, the only Women's Army Corps all-black battalion that served overseas in
10 World War II;

11 • Mabel Watson Raimey—Wisconsin's first black female attorney and first
12 African American female graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison;

13 • Susan Bazzelle Ellis and Millie White French—the first African American
14 teachers hired by Milwaukee Public Schools;

15 • Jay Mayo "Ink" Williams—pioneering producer of recorded blues music.
16 Williams was the most successful "race records" producer of his time, breaking all
17 previous records for sales in the genre. His work was key to keeping the Paramount
18 Records label of Grafton, Wisconsin afloat;

19 • Paul Jones—an enslaved leadworker in Sinsinawa, Grant County, Wisconsin,
20 who sued his employer George W. Jones for \$1,133 for trespassing on a promise to
21 pay him wages. Paul Jones lost his case because enslaved people were not considered
22 citizens, and therefore could not claim lost wages. Jones continued to work until his
23 emancipation in 1842, when he settled with other free blacks in the Pleasant Ridge
24 community in Iowa County;

1 • Lillian Fishburne—the first African American female to be promoted to the
2 rank of rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. Fishburne served as the chief of naval
3 operations in Washington, DC;

4 • Richard Arrington, Jr.—the first black mayor of the city of Birmingham,
5 Alabama, serving from 1979 to 1999. Arrington was the driving force behind the
6 creation of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, a museum dedicated to telling the
7 story of Birmingham, an epicenter of the struggle for racial and civil rights;

8 • Kurtis Walker—known by his stage name “Kurtis Blow”, Walker is a
9 songwriter, rapper, and record/film producer. He was one of the first commercially
10 successful rappers and the first to sign with a major record label;

11 • Mildred Harpole—Milwaukee educator, civil rights activist, Marquette
12 University graduate, and community leader who helped organize Freedom Schools
13 to teach children about the effects of racism during the 1964 citywide school boycott
14 to fight school segregation and went on to become a powerful advocate for fair
15 housing by working at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development;

16 • Dr. Rogers Onick—retired longtime Milwaukee Public Schools principal,
17 president of Metropolitan Milwaukee Alliance of Black School Educators, and active
18 community volunteer who generously supports students and teachers and shares his
19 expertise with school leaders across Wisconsin;

20 • Dr. O.C. White—African American community leader and civil servant,
21 affectionately known as Milwaukee’s black mayor, who created a job training
22 program in the 1960s that helped numerous African American men and women find
23 work in housing construction and, from the 1960s to the 1980s, served as a vital voice
24 for WAWA radio;

1 • Ceasar Stinson—a lobbyist for Milwaukee Public Schools for nearly two
2 decades, Stinson was a community advocate known for his keen understanding of
3 legislative policy and commitment to violence prevention. The frequent leader of a
4 weekly open meeting for black men to examine important issues impacting their
5 lives, Stinson, who tragically died in a January 2020 car accident, truly made his
6 voice heard and unforgettable;

7 • Tyrone Dumas—architect and educational consultant whose studies on how
8 having a driver’s license impacts job acquisitions, Dumas has drawn attention to the
9 severity of reckless driving in Milwaukee and southeast Wisconsin. Dumas’ work
10 has resulted in his recommended strategies to reduce the danger of this
11 life-and-death challenge for all citizens;

12 • Kwabena Antoine Nixon—a poet, youth development leader, and cofounder
13 of the I Will Not Die Young Campaign and the Flood the Hood with Dreams
14 organization, Nixon works to address the trauma that black boys and men face daily
15 in the city of Milwaukee by providing them with a place where they can use writing
16 and poetry to share their own stories;

17 • Muhibb Dyer—a nationally recognized poet and cofounder of the I Will Not
18 Die Young Campaign and the Flood the Hood with Dreams organization, travels the
19 country as a motivational speaker dedicated to helping African Americans develop
20 the “fortitude to make it through and make something of their lives”;

21 • Deborah Blanks—former CEO of the Social Development Commission,
22 Blanks writes eye-opening reports and books, such as *Weaving Diversity Into the*
23 *Fabric of America*, that explore how people of color can achieve greater economic
24 opportunity;

1 • Geraud Blanks—director of cultures and communities at Milwaukee Film,
2 Blanks draws on his extensive knowledge of media depictions of gender and race and
3 film history while selecting films for the organization’s Black Lens program, one of
4 the country’s largest film programs exclusively devoted to featuring the work of
5 African American directors;

6 • Camille Mays—a board member of Milwaukee Crime Stoppers and
7 community activist with the Sherman Park Community Organization, Mays
8 founded the Peace Garden Project MKE, an initiative that replaces makeshift
9 shrines for victims of homicide and car crashes with permanent landscaped
10 memorials. Mays works “every day, every night, every minute” to make Milwaukee
11 a safer and more peaceful place;

12 • Tatiana Washington—leading organizer for 50 Miles More and Team Enough,
13 two student organizations committed to curbing gun violence in schools and
14 communities. Washington remains a powerful and passionate voice for change and
15 stricter gun laws;

16 • Kobe Bryant—the youngest starting all-star in NBA history, two-time
17 Olympic gold medalist in basketball, and five-time NBA champion with the Los
18 Angeles Lakers. Bryant was also an Academy Award-winning film producer and
19 philanthropist;

20 • Gianna Bryant—award winning-basketball player with the Amateur
21 Athletic Union (AAU). Bryant was a stellar student-athlete and youth ambassador
22 for girls in sports; and

23 Whereas, while acknowledging the work of these leaders, it is equally critical
24 to appreciate, both past and present, the long list of contributions of our fellow
25 citizens. Black History Month gives Wisconsinites an occasion to recognize the

1 significant influence people of African heritage have made, and continue to make, in
2 the areas of medicine, art, politics, human rights, education, sports, and economic
3 development; now, therefore, be it

4 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the Wisconsin
5 Legislature recognizes February 2020 as Black History Month and extends
6 appreciation to the above-named persons for their contributions to the state of
7 Wisconsin and the country and their fellow citizens.

8 (END)