



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the City of Bismarck has a heritage to continue building upon, past and present, which will inform Juneteenth 2024; and

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived on July 4th, 1776, with the Declaration of Independence proclaiming: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, providing that all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free"; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth originated on June 19, 1865, when the Union Army reached Galveston, Texas, to announce the end of the American Civil War and that all African Americans were emancipated from the institution of slavery; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of the end of slavery, which is known as Emancipation Day, and later became known as Juneteenth, is the oldest known public celebration of the end of slavery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, one hundred fifty-nine years later (1865 to 2024) and 1,650 miles away (Galveston to Bismarck), the Juneteenth celebration honors the heritage of what the emancipation of all African Americans meant from the American Civil War to the present, nationally and locally; and

WHEREAS, this local heritage and history shows the arc of human liberation, one story after another, one successive generation after another; and

WHEREAS, one of the first African Americans to arrive in our area was York, an enslaved human being of Captain William Clark, who accompanied the Corps of Discovery and moved through the area known as Shepherd's Creek (aka, today's Apple Creek) from October 20 and 21, 1804; and



WHEREAS, Sally Campbell, an African American laundress stationed at Fort Abraham Lincoln during the 1870s, legally earned her emancipation in the same Saint Louis courthouse where the Dread Scott case was heard; and

WHEREAS, Era Bell Thompson graduated from Bismarck High School in the 1910s, and later charted her own path of journalism by becoming editor and journalist of Ebony magazine in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Satchel Paige arrived in our city in 1933 to pitch for the Bismarck Churchill's, helping them achieve a 38-12-5 record and claim the state championship that year; and

WHEREAS, as Bismarck's past demonstrates an African American history of explorers, entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, scholars, and civically engaged individuals, Juneteenth embraces present individuals charting a better future; and

WHEREAS, building on this non-exhaustive history, Juneteenth continues to empower groups to gather, and share past stories, present hopes and ideals that continue to inspire one another to chart and determine their futures; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of Juneteenth serves as a reminder of further progress we must make toward equity and reminds each of us of the precious promises of freedom, equality, and opportunity, which are at the core of the American Dream; and

WHEREAS, our community is committed to continued conversations with all citizens who have a desire to work collaboratively to address racial inequities, embrace past and present heritage and cultural diversity, and be a beacon of a diverse community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Michael Schmitz, Mayor of the City of Bismarck, on behalf of this City Commission, do hereby proclaim June 19th, 2024, as Juneteenth in the City of Bismarck.

Signed this 11th day of June 2024.

Michael Schmitz, Mayor
Bismarck Board of City Commissioners