

# Proclamation

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**WHEREAS**, since the beginning of Negro History Week in 1926 by noted historian Carter G. Woodson *and* the subsequent expansion to Black History Month in 1976, February has been a time when the nation reflects on the struggles and accomplishments of African Americans in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina boasts many noteworthy names and places for Black History Month: the unknown indentured servants who were free men and could vote in colonial times, soldiers who fought on either side during the American Revolution, and men and women who offered resistance and fled to freedom during antebellum times, or joined in the fight for freedom with the Civil War. Through the Civil Rights era to modern times, North Carolina has mirrored or amplified the African American movements to freedom and equality in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the Black History Month 2024 theme, “African Americans and the Arts,” explores the key influence African Americans have had in the fields of “visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, culinary and other forms of cultural expression” and

**WHEREAS**, Black people have played and continue to play significant roles in Carrboro’s economic, cultural, spiritual, and political development; and

**WHEREAS**, Black leaders in Carrboro have included several elected officials, including Alderman Braxton Foushee, Carrboro’s first Black elected official, who served from 1969 to 1981; Robert Drakeford, who served as alderman from 1975 to 1977 and as mayor from 1977 to 1983; Alderman Hilliard Caldwell, who served from 1981 to 1997; Alderman Henry “Hank” Anderson III, who served from 1993 to 1998; Alderman Joal Hall Broun, who served from 1999 to 2011 and currently serves as a district court judge for Orange and Chatham Counties; Alderman Michelle Johnson, who served from 2011 to 2017; and Council Member Barbara Foushee, who served from 2017 to 2023 and is now Carrboro’s first Black Woman Mayor; and

**WHEREAS**, Black people have played leadership roles as employees of the Town of Carrboro, including Richard Knight, Jr, who was the first Black person to serve as town manager from 1976 to 1980 and later became the first Black city manager of Dallas, Texas; and Richard J. White, III, who served as town manager from 2021 to 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the Carrboro Community Park was renamed the Henry Anderson III Park in honor of the late Alderman Hank Anderson; Baldwin Park was named for Henry W. Baldwin, a local Black community member and landowner; and Martin Luther King, Jr Park, which opened in 2020, featuring murals and plaques that honor Dr. King’s life and legacy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town is proud to recognize and celebrate Black people and Black history in Carrboro and across the nation during Black History Month; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town is committed to advancing racial equity and has recently taken multiple actions in support of this commitment, including:

- joining the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) in 2018, and in 2019 establishing a Racial Equity Core Team of employees who are leading the way toward equitable system changes across the organization;
- adopting the Carrboro Connects 2022-2042 Comprehensive Plan with race and equity as a foundational theme;

- establishing a process in which the racial equity assessment lens or equity pocket questions accompany Council Agenda Items to help provide a deeper awareness and guidance in decision making and centering equity
- the unveiling of a 3<sup>rd</sup> truth plaque at the Strayhorn House located at 109 Jones Ferry Road – home to the first Black family in Carrboro
- including funds in the fiscal year 2023 budget to conduct a disparity study that will inform changes to the Town’s procurement policies to increase opportunities for minority business enterprises;
- designating December 13, 2023, and every December 13th thereafter, as “Braxton Dunkin Foushee Day of Service” in Carrboro, on this day the Town will encourage the residents of Carrboro to learn and reflect on Carrboro’s Black history and perform an act of service for their neighbors or the community.
- Presenting the Carrboro Community Safety Alternatives to Policing Recommendation Report
- renaming East and West Carr St to Braxton Foushee Street on November 29, 2023
- adopting the first racial equity action plan (REAP) on November 29, 2023, which will weave equity into Carrboro Town Government and

**WHEREAS**, local celebrations of Black History Month this year will include a Black History Month Concert Series; a performance of the one-woman stage play *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman*; a two-night lecture series, “African Americans and the Arts,” focusing on social justice movements & artistic awareness, and “Celebrating Black People in America,” and how music was the escape from the unjust in the community; and a poets’ open mic held via Zoom; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the scheduled events, the Town will host a month-long youth art exhibit on the Carrboro Recreation, Parks & Cultural Resources Department’s website, 28 days of Black history trivia, and inspiring quotes, all shared via the Town’s social media channels; and

**WHEREAS**, in May and June of this year, the Town will again partner with the Music Maker Foundation to host the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Freight Train Blues Friday concert series in celebration of local music legend and Grammy Award recipient Elizabeth Cotten;

**WHEREAS**, numerous other celebrations of Black History Month will occur around the Triangle, a listing of which can be viewed at <https://triangleonthecheap.com/black-history-month/>; and

**WHEREAS**, learning about Black History is beneficial for everyone and helps to dissuade racism and is relevant year-round and

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, Barbara M. Foushee, mayor of the Town of Carrboro, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim February 2024 as Black History Month in Carrboro and encourage all residents to participate in local Black History Month events and to learn about and celebrate the lives, history, and contributions of Black people during this month and throughout the year.

**This the 30st day of January, 2024.**

*B.M. Foushee*  
Barbara M. Foushee

