

# *Proclamation*

## **Recognizing and Honoring Joy Gattis as a Carrboro Community Treasure**

**WHEREAS, Joy Gattis was born in Lymington, England, on February 24, 1944, during an air raid in World War 11, and**

**WHEREAS, After graduating from Grammar School, she worked as a clerk in a factory, a library assistant, and taught first grade after earning a Teaching Degree from Saffron Walden Teacher Training College, in Essex, England, where she majored in religion, and**

**WHEREAS, On September 29, 1966, while attending a dance at RAF Wethersfield, she met William Gattis, and instantly “liked what she saw,” and they were married on August 17, 1968, and**

**WHEREAS, Joy flew to the U.S. on January 12, 1969, while four months pregnant with their first son, to join William at Chanute AFB in Illinois, and after he was discharged in December 1969, she moved with him to Carrboro, N.C. where they have remained ever since, and**

**WHEREAS, One of the biggest challenges for Joy was learning to navigate a new culture without losing her own identity, and becoming aware of the socially acceptable norms for a society where racism and discrimination is commonplace, where her husband would be treated differently from the way she was when they were both in public, and**

**WHEREAS, From July 1973 - August 1978 Joy (or “Miss Joy” as she was now called) worked each Sunday morning caring for children in the church nursery at the Chapel of the Cross (COTC), and**

**WHEREAS, During this time William and Joy welcomed two more sons, born in 1973 and 1975, and**

**WHEREAS, On January 12, 1978, Joy was hired to organize a newly formed babysitting cooperative called “Mothers Morning Out” (MMO) at the University Presbyterian Church, and decided she wanted to teach the 2-year-olds, which she soon discovered to be her “passion and calling,” and delighted in her title of “Teacher Joy,” and**

**WHEREAS, Her training in England had been for grade school children, in order to better meet the needs of this age group, she enrolled in classes at Durham Technical Community College, and earned an Associate Degree in Early Children Education, and**

**WHEREAS, In 1982, shortly after the birth of their fourth son, in addition to her teaching duties, Joy also became the Director of MMO, (now called “MMO Early Childhood Cooperative Preschool”) and led the program through accreditation by the National Academy for Early Childhood Programs, and**

**WHEREAS, She also resumed working for the Chapel of the Cross in 1986 as their Sunday Morning Childhood Director, retiring from this position in 2016, and**

**WHEREAS In 2004, Joy went back to her first love—teaching 2-year olds, until retiring in 2014, and**

**WHEREAS, Joy has found participating in activities at the Seymour Center, including art classes, exercise programs, and social events, to be both enriching and fun, and**

WHEREAS, As a way to give back to the community, she joined the Friends Board of the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center in 2019, and serves on the Executive Committee as Corresponding Secretary, and

WHEREAS, Joy became an American citizen on September 29, 2008, and her hope for the future is that “we will respect, remember, and document the past, acknowledging the contributions of those who have strived to make the community a better and safer place to live in,” and

WHEREAS, Joy and William belong to a weekly St. Paul AME Church Bible Study Class, led by Reverend Mary Jane Palmer, where they have formed many long-lasting friendships, and

WHEREAS, They have many fond memories of family activities in Chapel Hill/Carrboro, when their children were young—making costumes for Trick or Treat, marching in the Christmas parade, and celebrations such as Apple Chill, July 4th, and Fall Festival, and

WHEREAS, In August 2023, Joy and William celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary and renewal of vows, with family and close friends at the Blue Hill Event Center in Chapel Hill, and

WHEREAS, The highlight of the event was their four sons and grandson doing a dance routine to the Temptations’ classic love ballad, “My Girl,” followed by daughters-in-law and niece Clare (visiting from England) dancing to “My Guy,”

NOW THEREFORE I, Barbara M. Foushee, Mayor of Carrboro, do hereby recognize and honor

**Joy Gattis**

As a Carrboro Community Treasure, and encourage the residents of Carrboro to join with us in expressing gratitude to Joy Gattis for the spirit of community and commitment she brings to the people of Carrboro.

This the 15<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025.

*B.M. Foushee*  
Barbara M. Foushee

