



Proclamation



400 YEARS OF PERSEVERANCE

WHEREAS, in August, 1619, the *White Lion*, a British privateer ship, landed at Point Comfort in what is now Hampton, Virginia, with approximately 20 Africans; these people had been captured from a Portuguese slave ship named *San Juan Bautista* which was sailing to Veracruz, Mexico; the crew of the *White Lion* traded the Africans to the Virginia colonists for food and supplies; and

WHEREAS, Africans had travelled to North America on previous occasions, but the arrival of these Africans in 1619 served as the beginning of the slave trade in the colonies that would become the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, in the centuries that followed, the institution of slavery became an integral factor in the culture and economy of the United States; people of African ancestry were key to building a nation that provided unprecedented freedom and extraordinary prosperity for those of European descent, while they toiled in servitude and abject poverty; and

WHEREAS, following the Civil War and the end of slavery in the United States, the hope for peaceful integration, equality and liberty was soon dashed by a powerful resurgence of white supremacy that quickly led to an era of profound racial injustice and terror, as well as segregation both in law and *de facto*; and

WHEREAS, unfortunately, the echoes of this era still resonate in our nation, as evidenced by the persistent presence of white supremacist groups, hate crimes, and events such as the march on Charlottesville, Virginia; as well as less-publicized, but still clear indications of inequity, including economic data, the incarceration rate, education statistics, employment rates, and health data; and

WHEREAS, despite centuries of oppression and marginalization, African-Americans built a vibrant and powerful culture which has shaped all aspects of society, not only in the United States, but throughout the entire world; this global influence would likely have seemed unimaginable to those Africans who set foot at Point Comfort in 1619 only to be sold as a commodity; and

WHEREAS, the African-American experience, which began in 1619, continues to be a source of inspiration to all people, exemplified by perseverance, resilience, and dignity in the face of hardships and ordeals that are unique in the human experience.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Lydia E. Lavelle, Mayor of Carrboro, North Carolina, ask our community to take this opportunity to recognize and celebrate 400 years of African-American history. I ask all residents to pause for a moment of quiet reflection to focus on the people who arrived at Point Comfort, Virginia, in 1619, after being torn from their homes, placed on a slave ship, captured by another ship and retained as cargo, then transported to a foreign land where, upon their arrival, they were recorded as “20 and odd” Africans, without even the dignity of names. I further ask that we commit to understanding the full truth of this history.

This, the 10th day of September 2019.



Lydia E. Lavelle, Mayor