



2021 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to:** proclaiming February 2022 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, this year marks over 400 years since the arrival of enslaved Africans
6 in Virginia. The existence of Africans in North America can be traced back to 1525,
7 and through 1866 the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is estimated to have ensnared
8 more than 12 million African people, with an estimated 10 million surviving the
9 unconscionable Middle Passage, landing in North America, the Caribbean, and
10 South America; and

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

14 Whereas, on February 12, 1926, noted Harvard scholar and historian Dr.
15 Carter G. Woodson founded “Negro History Week,” and since then the United States

1 has recognized first Negro History Week and then Black History Month and
2 celebrated the ethnic and racial diversity that enriches and strengthens our nation;
3 and

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

9 Whereas, people of African descent or African Americans have made
10 measurable differences in their respective industries, such as:

11 ***Activists and community leaders***

12 1. **Denmark Vesey**—Carpenter and formerly enslaved person. Allegedly
13 planned a revolt against slave owners in Charleston, South Carolina. Founder of the
14 African Methodist Episcopal congregation that would become Emanuel African
15 Methodist Episcopal Church.

16 2. **Nat Turner**—Preacher and Leader of Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831.

17 3. **Toussaint L'Ouverture**—Haitian General and Leader of the Haitian
18 Revolution.

19 4. **Alicia Garza**—Co-creator of #BlackLivesMatter and the Black Lives
20 Matter Global Network, Strategy and Partnerships Director for the National
21 Domestic Workers Alliance.

22 5. **Opal Tometi**—Human rights advocate and strategist, Co-founder of the
23 Black Lives Matter movement.

24 6. **Bobby Seale**—Co-founder of the Black Panther Party.

1 7. **Torre Johnson Sr.**—Founder of X-Men United and community and youth
2 advocate.

3 8. **Gab Taylor**—Cofounder of Program the Parks and member of Standing Up
4 for Racial Justice MKE.

5 9. **Fred Hampton**—American activist and Chairman of the Illinois Chapter
6 of the Black Panther Party.

7 10. **Venice Williams**—Founder and Executive Director of Alice’s Garden and
8 member of Kujichagulia Producers Cooperative.

9 ***Influential artists, writers, and journalists***

10 1. **Nikole Hannah Jones**—Pulitzer Prize–winning investigative journalist
11 and for her involvement on the 1619 Project.

12 2. **Gil Scott-Heron**—Spoken word poet and musician.

13 3. **Patrisse Cullors**—Black Lives Matter activist, artist, and writer.

14 4. **Bree Newsome**—Filmmaker, musician, and activist who removed the
15 Confederate Flag from the South Carolina state capitol on July 10, 2015.

16 5. **Angela Y. Davis**—Writer, teacher, activist, and Distinguished Professor
17 Emerita at the University of California–Santa Cruz.

18 ***Entertainers and celebrities***

19 1. **Colin Kaepernick**—Civil Rights Activist and Former NFL Quarterback.

20 2. **Eddie O’Jay**—Member of the Radio Hall of Fame, R&B disc jockey and
21 radio personality of WOKY/Milwaukee.

22 3. **Sidney Poitier**—Award–winning actor who was the first Black actor to win
23 the Academy Award for Best Actor. His decades–long career, starting in the 1940s,
24 paved the way for many other Black actors, and he received the Presidential Medal
25 of Freedom from President Barack Obama in 2009. He passed away earlier this year.

1 4. **Cicely Tyson**—Award-winning actress whose storied career spanned seven
2 decades. She was best known for her portrayal of strong Black women on television.
3 She passed away last year.

4 5. **Chadwick Boseman**—Internationally acclaimed actor best known for his
5 portrayal of T'Challa in Black Panther, as well as his portrayal of other historic Black
6 figures like Jackie Robinson, James Brown, and Thurgood Marshall.

7 6. **Giannis Antetokounmpo**—The son of Nigerian immigrants and member
8 of the Milwaukee Bucks who was the NBA's Most Valuable Player in 2019 and 2020
9 and led the Milwaukee Bucks to their second NBA Championship in 2021.

10 ***Public officials***

11 1. **Colin Powell**—The son of Jamaican immigrants who became the first Black
12 person to be confirmed as the United States Secretary of State. Mr. Powell also
13 served in many other high profile positions including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs
14 of Staff, National Security Advisor, and Deputy National Security Advisor. He
15 passed away last year due to complications from COVID-19.

16 2. **David Crowley**—Former state legislator, currently serving as the first
17 Black Milwaukee County Executive, as well as the youngest individual to be elected
18 to that position.

19 3. **Rev. Dr. James G. White**—Activist, Artist, and former Milwaukee County
20 Supervisor.

21 ***First responders and law enforcement officers***

22 1. **Kalvin Barrett**—Former Dane County deputy sheriff and the first Black
23 officer with the Sun Prairie Police Department, currently serving as the first Black
24 Sheriff of Dane County.

1 2. **Brian Chaney Austin**—19-year law enforcement veteran who is the
2 current Chief of Police in the city of Monona.

3 3. **Jeffrey B. Norman**—Chief of the Milwaukee Police Department who has
4 worked for over 25 years to maintain the integrity of the city’s police force. He also
5 holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from the University of
6 Wisconsin–Milwaukee, a Masters of Public Administration degree from Kaplan
7 University, and a Juris Doctor degree from Marquette University Law School.

8 ***Entrepreneurs and business owners***

9 1. **Dana Guthrie**—Managing Partner at Gateway Capital. She founded
10 Alchemy Angel Investors while being employed full time at a Fortune 500 company
11 and managing a multimillion-dollar, global product offering.

12 2. **Nadiyah Johnson**—A Milwaukee-based entrepreneur who is the founder
13 of Jet Constellations and the Milky Way Tech Hub who works to expand access for
14 People of Color and women in the tech industry.

15 3. **Salone Monet**—Founder and creative director of the color-inclusive nude
16 shoe brand, Salone Monet. The color-inclusive line has adorned the feet of Beyoncé
17 Knowles, Gabrielle Union, Keke Palmer, and a host of other influential women.

18 4. **Virgil Abloh**—American fashion designer and entrepreneur. He was the
19 artistic director of Louis Vuitton’s menswear collection beginning in 2018 and was
20 given increased creative responsibilities across the LVMH brand in early 2021. Mr.
21 Abloh was also the chief executive officer of the Milan-based label Off-White, a
22 fashion house he founded in 2013. He was also a graduate of the University of
23 Wisconsin–Madison with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.

24 5. **Gerard Randall**—Executive Director of the Milwaukee Education
25 Partnership, which aims to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in

1 Milwaukee Public Schools, bring every student up to grade level standards, improve
2 access to higher education opportunities, and advocate for public education. Mr.
3 Randall is the Managing Partner of The Lazarus Group, which provides education
4 and workforce development guidance, strategic planning, and support. He also
5 serves as adjunct professor with the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in the
6 Department of Education Policy and Community Studies.

7 **6. Gaulien “Gee” Smith**—Milwaukee barber and owner of Gee’s Clippers who
8 opened up a vaccination clinic in his barbershop to address vaccine hesitancy and
9 racial disparities in the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine. Because of his
10 efforts, he helped expand vaccine access to many in the greater Milwaukee
11 community. Gee’s Clippers is the largest Black barbershop in the state and has
12 served the Milwaukee community for almost 25 years; and

13 Whereas, while acknowledging the work of these leaders, it is equally critical
14 to appreciate, both past and present, the long list of contributions of our fellow
15 citizens; Black History Month gives Wisconsinites an occasion to recognize the
16 significant influence people of African heritage have made, and continue to make, in
17 the areas of medicine, art, politics, human rights, education, sports, law
18 enforcement, and economic development; now, therefore, be it

19 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the Wisconsin
20 Legislature recognizes February 2022 as Black History Month and extends
21 appreciation to the above-named persons for their contributions to the state of
22 Wisconsin, the country, and their fellow citizens.

23 (END)