



State of Wisconsin
2023 - 2024 LEGISLATURE

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2023 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 12

February 14, 2023 - Introduced by Senators L. JOHNSON, AGARD, CARPENTER, WIRCH, LARSON, SPREITZER, SMITH, HESSELBEIN, ROYS and PFAFF, cosponsored by Representatives DRAKE, BALDEH, MYERS, HAYWOOD, STUBBS, MOORE OMOKUNDE, MADISON, NEUBAUER, OHNSTAD, SHELTON, SNODGRASS, PALMERI, CLANCY, HONG, GOYKE, ANDRACA, SINICKI, RATCLIFF, CONSIDINE, C. ANDERSON, J. ANDERSON, BARE, VINING, RIEMER, ALLEN, MURPHY, EMERSON, JOERS, SUBECK, ORTIZ-VELEZ, CONLEY, BILLINGS, SHANKLAND, CABRERA, JACOBSON, DOYLE and MCGUIRE. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** proclaiming February 2023 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 1. Elisterine Clayton — 100-year-old Milwaukee resident, who along with her
12 husband Powell Clayton were a part of building the historic Halyard Park
13 community. Halyard Park is one of the longest-standing African-American middle
14 class residential neighborhoods within Milwaukee. Elisterine owned and operated
15 a series of grocery stores in underserved communities and ensured that residents
16 had access to healthy food options within their neighborhoods. She was a part of a
17 pioneering group that brought Black-owned banks, medical practices, and
18 businesses to the Bronzeville area.

19 2. Torre Johnson, Sr. — Founder of X-Men United. Longtime Community and
20 Youth Advocate. Connected to Jeanetta Robinson and CYD.

21 3. Gab Taylor — Cofounder of Program the Parks and member of Standing Up
22 for Racial Justice. Held activities and programming for youth in Sherman park since
23 2016 and fed hundreds of young people from Sherman Park to Moody Park.

1 4. Paul Higginbotham — The first African-American judge to serve on the
2 Wisconsin Court of Appeals. He was appointed to the court by Governor James Doyle
3 in 2003 and subsequently elected to the court in 2005.

4 5. Marcia Anderson — A retired senior officer of the United States Army
5 Reserve from Beloit, Wisconsin. The first African-American woman to become a
6 major general in the United States Army Reserve.

7 6. Alonzo Robinson Jr. — Wisconsin's first African-American registered
8 Architect and the City of Milwaukee's first Black registered Municipal Architect. On
9 Tuesday, November 30, 2021, the Milwaukee Fire Department Administration
10 building was renamed after Alonzo Robinson.

11 7. Dr. William Rogers — a historian and educator, who was an integral part of
12 the formation of the Black Radio Network, an African studies educator, who made
13 significant contributions to the study of Black life, civil rights, and social justice; now,
14 therefore, be it

15 *Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That* the Wisconsin
16 Legislature recognizes February 2023 as Black History Month and extends
17 appreciation to the above-named persons for their contributions to the state of
18 Wisconsin, the country, and their fellow citizens.

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(END)