



2013 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 70

1 **Relating to:** recognizing Black History Month.

2 Whereas, Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first
3 as “Negro History Week” and later as “Black History Month,” and the Wisconsin
4 legislature has commemorated February as Black History Month to honor the lives
5 and contributions of Wisconsin African American residents; and

6 Whereas, we are commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights
7 Act, which drew from many African Americans taking a positive stance on breaking
8 down the barriers to racial equality; and

9 Whereas, Clayborn Benson, a native of Milwaukee who faced challenges as an
10 impoverished youth, graduated from the old West Division High School despite being
11 labeled “learning disabled”; and

12 Whereas, Clayborn Benson is the founder and executive director of the Black
13 Historical Society and Museum, which documents and preserves the historical
14 heritage of people of African descent in Wisconsin; and

1 Whereas, the Black Historical Society Museum exhibits, collects, and
2 disseminates materials depicting African heritage, while serving as a resource
3 center for all people interested in African American heritage and as a promoter of
4 family, community, and cultural activities; and

5 Whereas, James Hightower III, on June 15, 2013, at the age of 12, became the
6 youngest African American in American history to earn the honor of Eagle Scout,
7 scouting's highest honor; and

8 Whereas, James Hightower III, for his Eagle Scout service project, rebuilt six
9 bleachers at the three baseball fields of Kletzsch Park, leading recruitment and
10 fundraising efforts for this massive undertaking that enriched the Glendale and
11 Milwaukee communities; and

12 Whereas, James Hightower III is an inspiration for children and adults in
13 Milwaukee and in the entire state of Wisconsin for his commitment to setting and
14 achieving ambitious goals and working tirelessly to invest in and give back to his
15 community and the world around him; and

16 Whereas, many African Americans have served in the legislature, including
17 former senators Spencer Coggs, Gary George, Gwendolynne Moore, and Monroe
18 Swan and former representatives Lloyd Barbee, Cecil B. Brown Jr., Elizabeth Coggs,
19 Marcia P. Coggs, Isaac Coggs, Jason Fields, Tamara Grigsby, Raymond Lee Lathan,
20 Johnnie Morris-Tatum, Lucien Palmer, Antonio Riley, Le Roy Simmons, Walton
21 Bryan Stewart, Barbara Toles, and Robert Turner; now, therefore, be it

22 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the Wisconsin
23 legislature recognizes February 2014 as Black History Month and extends thanks
24 and praise to Clayborn Benson, James Hightower III, and the many African

1 Americans who have served in the legislature for their contributions to the state of
2 Wisconsin.

3 (END)