2019 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 64


Relating to: recognizing June 19, 2019, as the 57th celebration of Juneteenth Day in the State of Wisconsin.

Whereas, Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free; and

Whereas, this was two and a half years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation—which had become official January 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops to enforce the new Executive Order. However, with the surrender of General Lee in April of 1865, and the arrival of General Granger’s regiment, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance; and

Whereas, attempts to explain this two and one-half year delay in the receipt of this important news have yielded several versions that have been handed down through the years. Often told is the story of a messenger who was murdered on his
way to Texas with the news of freedom. Another is that the news was deliberately
withheld by the enslavers to maintain the labor force on the plantations; and

Whereas, the federal troops actually waited for the slave owners to reap the
benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas to enforce the Emancipation
Proclamation. All of which, or neither of these versions could be true. Certainly, for
some, President Lincoln’s authority over the rebellious states was in question. For
whatever the reasons, conditions in Texas remained status quo well beyond what
was statutory; and

Whereas, Northcott Neighborhood House, Inc., has sponsored Juneteenth
festivities for all 57 years. Juneteenth today celebrates African American freedom
and achievement while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all
cultures. As it takes on a more national, symbolic, and even global perspective, the
events of 1865 in Texas are not forgotten, for all of the roots tie back to this fertile soil
from which a national day of pride is growing; and

Whereas, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has one of the largest celebrations in the
United States, and in 2019 there will be a variety of festivities: Miss & Little Miss
Juneteenth Pageant and Juneteenth Parade and Festival that thousands
participate in and attend; and

Whereas, Northcott Neighborhood House’s Executive Director MacArthur
Weddle and Program Director Adriane Griffin will serve as the 2019 Grand Marshals
of the Juneteenth Parade, they have been the leaders and trailblazers of the success
of Juneteenth festivities in Milwaukee and a model for other cities to replicate for
decades; now, therefore, be it
Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin State Legislature hereby recognize June 19, 2019, as the 57th celebration of Juneteenth Day in the State of Wisconsin.

(END)