2019 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 92

October 8, 2019 – Introduced by Representatives L. MYERS, STUBBS, CROWLEY, FIELDS, BOWEN, HAYWOOD, SINICKI, HEBL, C. TAYLOR, KOLSTE, ZAMARRIPA, HINTZ, MILROY, CONSIDINE, SPREITZER, SARGENT, HESSELBEIN, ANDERSON, NEUBAUER, BROSTOFF and VRUWINK, cosponsored by Senators L. TAYLOR, JOHNSON, WIRCH, CARPENTER, BEWLEY and HANSEN. Referred to Committee on Rules.

Relating to: declaring September 8 to 14, 2019, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week in Wisconsin.

Whereas, historically black colleges and universities are defined as institutions of higher learning established prior to 1964 whose primary mission was, and is, to educate formerly enslaved persons and their descendants; and

Whereas, some of the first schools to educate Black Americans began in church basements, abandoned schoolhouses, and private homes; and

Whereas, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, founded in 1837, is the nation’s first historically black college in the United States; and

Whereas, the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890 mandated states to allow blacks admission to institutions of higher education or to build schools specifically to serve them; and

Whereas, historically black colleges and universities provided black students with access to higher education at a time when racial segregation was legal and widely practiced; and
Whereas, there are 101 accredited historically black colleges and universities in the United States today; and

Whereas, historically black colleges and universities empower students and provide them with a diverse, supportive, and collaborative atmosphere in which to learn; and

Whereas, nearly 50,000 degrees were awarded by historically black colleges and universities in 2017; and

Whereas, historically black colleges and universities have educated countless black leaders who have made significant contributions to American society, including:

- The Tuskegee Airmen, educated at Tuskegee University — the first Black American military aviators in the U.S. Armed Forces
- William Montague Cobb, educated at Howard University — the first Black American to earn a PhD in anthropology, an advocate who worked to disprove misinformation in racially and socially biased studies in anatomy and anthropology, and the former president of the NAACP
- Donald Driver, educated at Alcorn State University — former wide receiver for the Green Bay Packers
- W. E. B. Du Bois, educated at Fisk University — the first Black American to be awarded a doctorate, a civil rights leader, and the co-founder of the NAACP
- William Finlayson, educated at Meharry Medical College — prominent Milwaukee physician and founder of North Milwaukee State Bank, the first black-owned full-service banking institution in Milwaukee
• Althea Gibson, educated at Florida A&M University — trailblazing tennis player and the first black woman to compete in and win numerous competitions, including a Grand Slam tournament and a Wimbledon championship

• Ardie Clark Halyard, educated at Atlanta University — founder of Columbia Savings and Loan Association, the first black lending institution in Wisconsin

• Katherine Johnson, educated at West Virginia State College — mathematician whose calculations of orbital mechanics as a NASA employee were critical to the success of the first manned spaceflight by the United States

• Martin Luther King, Jr., educated at Morehouse College — civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner who combated racial inequality through nonviolent activism

• Vel R. Phillips, educated at Howard University — the first Black American female graduate of University of Wisconsin Law School, jurist, and former Wisconsin Secretary of State

• Frances Brock Starms, educated at Spelman College — prominent educator who served as the first director of Milwaukee Public Schools’ Head Start program

• Oprah Winfrey, educated at Tennessee State University — media executive, actress, philanthropist, the first black female billionaire, and former resident of Milwaukee; and

Whereas, it is important to celebrate the legacy and continued significance of historically black colleges and universities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the Wisconsin Legislature recognizes September 8 to 14, 2019, as Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week in Wisconsin.

(END)