
ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: recognizing Black History Month.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the Wisconsin legislature recognizes February 2014 as Black History Month and extends thanks and praise to Clayborn Benson, James Hightower III, and the many African Americans who have served in the legislature for their contributions to the state of Wisconsin.

Representative Robin J. Vos
Speaker of the Assembly

Senator Michael G. Ellis
President of the Senate

Date

Jeffrey Renk
Senate Chief Clerk