

PROCLAMATION

MISSOULA COUNTY AND THE CITY OF MISSOULA

WHEREAS, in 1926, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History started a national Negro History Week in the second week of February, intentionally chosen because it fell between the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, following the Civil Rights Movement and a growing awareness of Black identity, in 1976, President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month, urging the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history”; and

WHEREAS, while African American people have never totaled more than 1 percent of the state’s population, they have been in the place that would become Montana since the earliest days of non-Indigenous presence and contribute greatly to Montana’s culture, economy and religious life; and

WHEREAS, Missoula County and the City of Missoula recognize Montana’s Black history, spanning from the first documented arrival of enslaved Africans in 1805 as part of the Lewis and Clark expedition into the aboriginal territories of the Séliš and Ql̓ispé people and the publication of Montana’s first Black newspaper, “The Colored Citizen,” in 1894, to the election of Geraldine Travis, the first African-American woman elected to the Montana Legislature in 1974, and the election of the state’s first Black Mayor, Wilmot Collins, in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Montana’s Black history is reflected in Missoula through the bravery and valor displayed by the 25th Infantry Bicycle Corps, the United States’ first unit of Black soldiers formed in 1896 to test the combat viability of bicycles, including an over-1,900-mile ride from Fort Missoula to St. Louis, Missouri; and

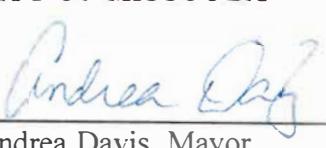
WHEREAS, Missoula County and the City of Missoula are proud to join the State of Montana in “recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of Black Americans who are part of the fabric of our Nation,” here in Montana and throughout America, both past and present.

NOW THEREFORE, we, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners and the mayor of the City of Missoula, do hereby proclaim the month of February 2026 as

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

DATED THIS 5TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2026

CITY OF MISSOULA


Andrea Davis, Mayor

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MISSOULA COUNTY


Josh Slotnick, Chair


David Strombaier, Commissioner


Juanita Vero, Commissioner