

PROCLAMATION

“JUNETEENTH FREEDOM DAY” IN CITY OF SELMA

Whereas, Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the abolition of slavery in the United States and the emancipation of African American slaves throughout the Confederate South. Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865 with news that the war had ended and the enslaved were now free, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863. Until that day, slavery had been relatively unaffected in Texas by the Emancipation Proclamation, and Texas had even been viewed as a safe haven for slave owners to relocate with their slaves because the state experienced no large-scale fighting or significant presence of Union troops; and

Whereas, On that first Juneteenth, a name that combines June and 19, the people of Texas were read General Order Number 3, which stated: *"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer."* The Juneteenth announcement was met with jubilation that spread throughout the country as African Americans relocated to neighboring states and became reacquainted with family; and

Whereas, The first Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassurance, prayer and the gathering of family members. Juneteenth continued to be widely observed in Texas decades later, with many former enslaved people and their descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston. Juneteenth today continues to grow within communities and organizations throughout the country. Numerous local and national Juneteenth organizations have arisen alongside older organizations with the common mission of promoting and cultivating knowledge and appreciation of African American history and culture, while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all people and cultures; and

Whereas, on a larger scale, celebration of Juneteenth reminds each of us of the precious promises of freedom, equality, and opportunity which are the core of our God-given rights. Let us reflect on our past while we work together to combat the systemic racial, economic, and gender injustices that remain deeply rooted into the fabric of our society.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Darrio Melton, Mayor of the City of Selma, Alabama, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2020:

JUNETEENTH FREEDOM DAY

in the City of Selma and urge all citizens to become more aware of the significance of the celebration in African-American history and in the heritage of our nation and City.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Selma, Alabama to be affixed this 16th day of June, 2020.

Mayor Darrio Melton