

# PROCLAMATION

## BOROUGH OF RED BANK

**WHEREAS**, IN 1776, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WAS IMAGINED AS A NEW NATION DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT "ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"; AND

**WHEREAS** THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES INCLUDES INJUSTICES AND THE DENIAL OF BASIC, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND THESE INJUSTICES INCLUDE APPROXIMATELY 250 YEARS OF SLAVERY, 100 YEARS OF LYNCHINGS, DENIAL OF BOTH FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS, AND WITHHOLDING OF THE BASIC RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP AND THESE INEQUALITIES AND INJUSTICES IN OUR SOCIETY STILL EXIST TODAY; AND

**WHEREAS** MANY AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN AND WOMEN WORKED AGAINST RACISM TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS INCLUDING PIONEERS SUCH AS THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, BARACK OBAMA AND RED BANK RESIDENTS SUCH AS WILLIAM "COUNT" BASIE, T. THOMAS FORTUNE AND OUR FIRST FIRE CHIEF OF COLOR NOEL BLACKWOOD, WHO HAVE ALL SERVED AS POSITIVE BENEFICIARIES OF OUR FOREFATHERS AND AS GREAT ROLE MODELS AND LEADERS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS;

**WHEREAS**, ONE OF THESE PIONEERS, T. THOMAS FORTUNE CHOSE TO MOVE WITH HIS FAMILY TO THE BOROUGH OF RED BANK 1901 AND HE RESIDED IN A HOME, KNOWN AS MAPLE HILL, ON BERGEN PLACE FOR MANY YEARS AND MR. FORTUNE'S HOUSE IS ONE OF ONLY FIFTY-FIVE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS, AND ONE OF ONLY TWO LANDMARKS ASSOCIATED WITH AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY, IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND

**WHEREAS** BLACK HISTORY MONTH, CELEBRATED DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, DATES BACK TO 1926 WHEN CARTER G. WOODSON SET ASIDE A SPECIAL PERIOD OF TIME IN FEBRUARY TO RECOGNIZE THE HERITAGE AND ACHIEVEMENT OF BLACK AMERICANS;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF RED BANK AGREE THAT, WHILE THE UNITED STATES BEGAN IN DIVISION, WE MUST NOW MOVE FORWARD WITH PURPOSE, UNITED TIRELESSLY AS ONE NATION, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, AND HONOR THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALL PIONEERS WHO HELP ENSURE THE LEGACY OF THESE GREAT UNITED STATES AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF THE WEALTH OF HISTORY GIVEN TO US BY BLACK CULTURE AND RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON THE COMPLEX HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, WHILE REMAINING HOPEFUL AND CONFIDENT ABOUT THE PATH THAT LIES AHEAD;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** FEBRUARY 2021 IS DESIGNATED AS "BLACK HISTORY MONTH" IN THE BOROUGH OF RED BANK AS THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF RED BANK AGREE THAT, WHILE THE UNITED STATES BEGAN IN DIVISION, WE MUST NOW MOVE FORWARD WITH PURPOSE, UNITED TIRELESSLY AS ONE NATION, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL,

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PASQUALE MENNA  
MAYOR