

WHEREAS, in 1926 during the middle of the Harlem Renaissance in America, a movement where artists embraced pride in Black life and identity, awareness grew of the inequalities and discrimination Black Americans were experiencing; and

WHEREAS, through their work, Carter G. Woodson and Minister Jesse E. Moorland laid the foundation for Black History Month with the celebration of “Negro History Week” to document achievements of Black Americans and highlight Black representation in important policy decisions; and

WHEREAS in 1976, President Gerald Ford made Black History Month a national observance, declaring that, “in celebrating Black History Month, we can take satisfaction from this recent progress in the realization of the ideals envisioned by our Founding Fathers. But, even more than this, we can seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history”; and

WHEREAS, the contributions of Black Americans have yielded numerous positive results for the entire society, including the Black women of the United States Army’s 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all Black US Women’s Army Corps unit sent overseas during World War II, working tirelessly to assist with a backlog of undelivered mail, which they delivered in a record time of 90 days; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Anita St. Hill Chisholm was the first Black woman in Congress in 1968, opening the door for 57 other Black women and 59 women of color to serve as well. Congresswoman Chisholm was the first woman of any race to seek the Presidential nomination for any party, and she laid the foundation for other women to follow, including former Vice President, Kamala Harris who received the Democratic Presidential nomination in 2024; and

WHEREAS, when the World Health Organization officially declared a global pandemic due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on March 11, 2020, it was Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, a Black scientist with the National Institute of Health working with Moderna, who helped to develop the COVID-19 vaccine; and

WHEREAS, locally the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners are committed to ensuring that all the residents of the community have access to equitable treatment and services, particularly Black residents who have encountered marginalization through historical governmental policies and practices. The County’s commitment to equity was placed as a foundational component of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and it is the guiding principle of the inaugural Buncombe County Racial Action Equity Plan; and

WHEREAS, Buncombe County has furthered its commitment to equity through the adoption of its nationally recognized 2043 Comprehensive Plan, which indicates that “Buncombe County will strive to address social, economic, and environmental inequities by repairing and investing in historically disadvantaged communities and replacing inequitable land use and transportation policies and regulations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that on this 18th day of February 2025, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim February 2025 as Black Legacy Month, a time to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures of Black people, to raise awareness about our shared history, to recognize that truth must come before reconciliation, and to acknowledge the important contributions that Black people have made to our community and our nation.