

**Yolo County
Board of Supervisors**

Resolution No. 24-16

Proclaiming February 2024 as Black History Month

WHEREAS, Black History Month has roots dating back to February 1926 when Dr. Carter G Woodson, a prominent Black American author and historian, chose the week in February because it included the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass as a time to study the history of Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Congress passed a law designating February 1986 as National Black History Month and directed the president to issue a proclamation encouraging the people of the United States to observe February as Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, Yolo County has had black residents since before 1850, with 22 Black citizens being listed on the 1952 census and the number climbing to 61 black citizens by 1871; and

WHEREAS, prominent black figures in Yolo County history include Basil Campbell who came to California as an enslaved person in 1854 before buying his freedom in 1861 and starting his own farm in Woodland. His farm was incredibly successful and by 1884 he was one of the largest landowners in Yolo County, owning what would eventually become the Cache Creek Nature Preserve. His story became famous nationwide, and he often encouraged and assisted black migrants in coming to California. In the 1870s, Campbell became involved in politics and activism as a delegate to the State and then National Conventions for Black People; and

WHEREAS, another prominent black Yolo County resident in history was Mary Frances Gaither who was born in 1865, the same year the Civil War ended. She was trained as a nurse in Missouri and came to California as an adult. She delivered most of the infants born in and around Esparto. She founded the first nursing home in Esparto and also joined together with two other African American women – Sophie Raymus and Mary Belle Padmore – to found the Greater Second Baptist Church, the first and only African American church in Yolo County; and

WHEREAS, Black History is American History and it is of critical importance to preserve and uplift stories about black persons within our community; and

WHEREAS, the theme of Black History Month 2024 is “African Americans and the Arts” which asks people to reflect on and appreciate the enormity of Black American’s contributions to art throughout American History; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of black artists in Yolo County and the surrounding region, YoloArts and Gallery 625 have partnered with Shonna McDaniels, the Executive Director of the Sojourner Truth African Heritage Museum in Sacramento, to present “The Art of Soul” exhibit at the County Administrative building; and

WHEREAS, the County of Yolo will continue to work to promote equality through the work of the newly formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force, and through the search for and recruitment of a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Yolo County Board of Supervisors joins with the State of California in proclaiming February 2024 as Black History Month and recognizing the important contributions of black artists. The Board of Supervisors recognizes the ongoing impacts of systemic racism and understands that a key strategy to combatting racism is to uplift black voices so that they are shared far and wide.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 13th day of February, 2024 by the following vote:

AYES: Vixie Sandy, Provenza, Barajas, Villegas, Frerichs.

Lucas Frerichs, Chair
Yolo County Board of Supervisors