



## A Proclamation of the Pierce County Council Proclaiming the Month of February 2024 as "Black History Month" in Pierce County, Washington.

**Whereas**, in 1976, President Gerald Ford officially recognized February as "Black History Month," calling upon 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**, locally, we celebrate an extraordinary leader of Pierce County, the late Harold G. Moss, who was the City of Tacoma's first Black Councilmember (1970) and its Mayor (1994), the first Black Pierce County Council Councilmember (1996) and its Chair (2002-2004), former President of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Tacoma Chapter (1957-1961); and

**Whereas**, this year's theme is "African Americans and the Arts," which recognizes the many impacts Black Americans have had on visual arts, movements, music and literature, and art is an important cultural touchstone, preserving traditions and empowering communities, and includes movements such as the Black Arts, Black Renaissance, hip-hop, and Afrofuturism, Black artists such as Alma Thomas, Maya Angelou, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Misty Copeland, Kehinde Wiley, Alvin Ailey, Jimi Hendrix, Octavia Butler, and many more trailblazers of American culture; and

**Whereas**, the Pierce County Council recognizes the significant contributions, both past and present, of Pierce County's Black and African American community, and encourages all Pierce County residents to use the month of February as an opportunity to explore Black history and gain a greater appreciation for the richness and depth of Black and African American contributions to our communities, our county, our state, and our nation; and

**Whereas**, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Black-owned businesses tend to fail within the first ten months of opening, so in 2022, Mari Griffin, a local entrepreneur, created the Black Night Market, an innovative marketplace that highlights Black Indigenous and People of Color owned businesses and visual and performing artists; and

**Whereas**, Griffin noticed there was a lack of representation of black vendors at local art and farmers markets, and representation tended to only occur during specific holidays or after a tragic event within the community, and it was Griffin's vision to create a pathway for consistent opportunities for Black-owned businesses and artists that led to the creation of Black Night Market; and

**Whereas**, since its inception two years ago, the Market went from 42 to 130 vendors and almost two thousand attendees, and the Black Night Market has successfully created consistent opportunities for over 800 Black-owned business, and was the recipient of five local awards; and

**Whereas**, 212 Black-owned businesses have been supported by the Pierce County Navigator Program of which 105 Black businesses participated in the Business Accelerator Program and have received approximately 365 hours of business coaching and over \$400,000 of Professional Business Services Grants and 70 percent of participants have raised a total of over \$1.4 million in new capital; and

**Whereas**, the Tacoma Urban League's Black Business Directory makes supporting Black-owned businesses in Pierce County easy with a full directory at [www.tulmembers.com](http://www.tulmembers.com); and

**Whereas**, residents may join in local events that celebrate and recognize Black History Month, for event details please visit [piercecountywa.gov/blackhistorymonth](http://piercecountywa.gov/blackhistorymonth); **Now, Therefore,**

**BE IT PROCLAIMED on this 30<sup>th</sup> day of January 2024** by the Pierce County Council that the month of February 2024 is "Black History Month" in Pierce County, Washington, and all residents are encouraged to join in local special observances and partake in community education and celebration events across Pierce County.

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