

City of San Rafael
Proclamation Commemorating
Juneteenth

- WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States; and
- WHEREAS, from its Galveston, Texas origin in 1865, the observance of June 19th as the African American Emancipation Day has spread across the United States and beyond, and today Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement; and
- WHEREAS, it is a day, a week, and in some areas a month marked with celebrations, speakers, picnics, and family gatherings. It is also a time for reflection and rejoicing; a time for assessment, self-improvement and for planning the future; and
- WHEREAS, we find ourselves in a critical moment of reckoning as it pertains to the lives, liberties, and dreams of African American families locally, nationally, and globally. We understand this moment to be one where we must invest in, support, and respect African American lives; and
- WHEREAS, in cities across the country people of all races, nationalities, and religions are joining hands to truthfully acknowledge a period in our history that has shaped and continues to influence the current state of our nation and society; and
- WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation which ended slavery greatly influenced migration patterns across the United States and shaped the culture of the Bay Area and Marin County, adding great depth, vibrancy, and value to this diverse region and the State of California; and
- WHEREAS, we acknowledge that this vibrancy, depth, and value has often been marginalized and underserved, and that we utilize this moment to commit to the implementation and valuation of racial equity in the City of San Rafael; and
- WHEREAS, in the tradition of Juneteenth, we honor the experience of those who came before us and acknowledge the importance of bearing witness to the sacrifices of our ancestors and elders; and
- WHEREAS, while Juneteenth was widely celebrated following the Civil War, it experienced decline and repression in the 20th century until the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and we support it in the spirit of civil rights for ourselves and for all; and
- WHEREAS, the promise of Juneteenth remains elusive for African Americans as seen most recently in the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Sandra Bland and countless others; and
- WHEREAS, we honor the memory of enslaved persons, freemen, passengers and supporters of the Underground Railroad and all those who have tirelessly pursued freedom and self-determination; and
- WHEREAS, we call to mind those who continue to suffer in various forms of slavery across the globe even today and reject the tyranny and inhumanity of such bondage; and
- WHEREAS, we affirm that when people are sensitized to the conditions and experiences of others, only then can we make significant and lasting improvements in our society; and
- WHEREAS, we call upon the people of the City of San Rafael to eliminate prejudice, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people and the extraordinary contributions of African Americans; to look upon the current state of our nation as an opportunity for change that brings about racial equity through the work of radical imagination, intention, purpose, and continued work towards the eradication of prejudice, racism, and injustice.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that every June 19th is recognized annually in the City of San Rafael as a celebration of the emancipation of enslaved persons in the United States and the City reaffirms its commitment to safeguard the civil rights, safety, and dignity of African Americans.



Kate Colin
Mayor