



## PROCLAMATION

### Black History Month 2026

**WHEREAS**, Black History Month is observed nationally each February to honor Black excellence, resistance, and legacy, and in 2026 marks a century of national Black history commemorations. Designed to coincide with the birthday of Frederick Douglass, historian Carter G. Woodson launched Negro History Week in February 1926 to encourage the teaching of Black history across communities and public schools; and

**WHEREAS**, Black history within Joliet Township includes a thriving Black community that built its own Black Wall Street complete with Black-owned businesses, The Negro Voice newspaper, numerous civic & social clubs, an influential church presence, active involvement in the civil rights movement, and a strong rate of homeownership during the Great Migration; and

**WHEREAS**, Joliet Township Government demonstrates its commitment to honoring Black history through its support for the Joliet Area African American Historic Context Study since February 2024. This important initiative in collaboration with the City of Joliet, the Joliet Area Historical Museum, and History on Wheels — African Descendants Military and Historical Museum, is focused on preserving and documenting Black history in the region; and

**WHEREAS**, Black History Month serves as both a celebration and a powerful reminder that Black history is American history, and the histories, cultures, and contributions of Black people are inseparable from the story of this nation, shaping its past, present, and future; and

**WHEREAS**, across the generations, countless Black Americans have demonstrated profound courage and perseverance, leading the charge in confronting injustices and serving as the nation's moral compass while rising above social, political, and economic barriers. Black Americans have made and continue to make America a better place and Americans a better people. We take each February to commemorate this truth; and

**WHEREAS**, this Black History Month, let us pay tribute to and draw inspiration and strength from the many unknown and unnamed heroes who came before us who risked their lives for freedom and fought a fight that at times seemed impossible to win but persisted nonetheless; and

**WHEREAS**, this month centers the histories, achievements and involvement of Black Americans, whose resilience, creativity, intellect, and leadership continue to shape our society amidst the legacy of slavery, systemic oppression, and the struggle for recognition of one's humanity; and

**WHEREAS**, visionary leaders and Black-led movements have transformed the nation, with legacies including but not limited to the leadership of Ida B. Wells, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, Assata Shakur, Fred Hampton, and Malcolm X; the organizing power of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Urban League, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party; and the historic achievements of trailblazers such as Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first Black woman Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, the first Black Supreme Court Justice, Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman to serve in Congress and run for President, and Barack Obama, the first Black President; and

**WHEREAS**, Black women have been central to Black history and progress as organizers, educators, leaders, and culture-bearers whose labor, care, and vision have sustained families, movements, and communities across generations as demonstrated through Joliet’s Chapter of the National Hook-Up of Black Women; and

**WHEREAS**, today’s Black leaders continue to advance justice, culture, innovation, and civic life, strengthening Joliet Township through their brilliance, leadership, and commitment to community; and

**WHEREAS**, Joliet Township Government stands with our Black sisters and brothers in the fight for liberation, denounces anti-Black racism, and vehemently affirms that Black lives do matter; and

**WHEREAS**, we are reminded by the words of Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist and author of *The 1619 Project*, that “[without] the idealistic, strenuous and patriotic efforts of Black Americans, our democracy today would most likely look very different – it might not be a democracy at all;” and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Joliet Township Government, hereby proclaims February 2026 as Black History Month in Joliet Township and encourages residents to honor, celebrate, and invest in Black history, culture, and futures all year-round.

**ADOPTED** this 10<sup>th</sup> day of February of 2026.

  
Cesar Guerrero, Township Supervisor

ATTEST:

  
Kendra Landfair, Township Clerk