



Proclamation Celebrating Black History Month

- WHEREAS,** Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, originated in 1926 to recognize the heritage and achievements of Black people in the United States; and
- WHEREAS,** since its founding, Albemarle County has imperfectly progressed toward its mission of enhancing the well-being of all its residents; and
- WHEREAS,** following the Civil War, 52% of the local population were freed and soon thereafter, established a vibrant community of black-owned farms and homesteads known as Union Ridge that stretched across three miles, connecting present-day Hydraulic, Georgetown, and Woodburn roads; and
- WHEREAS,** Isabella Gibbons established a school for freed people in Albemarle County upon her emancipation at the end of the Civil War; and Rives Minor and Jesse Scott Sammons were long-term educators at the Union Ridge Grade School, established in 1886; and Mary Carr Greer was instrumental to its expansion when it became the Albemarle Training School in 1893 and served as the first and only four-year high school for the County's Black students until 1959; and John Gibbons Shelton, principal of the Albemarle Training School, also ran and edited the area's Black newspaper; and Dr. George R. Ferguson was the first Black physician with a sustained practice in Albemarle County from the early 1900s until 1932; and
- WHEREAS,** the substantial contributions of Albemarle County's Black residents to the County's history have not always been adequately recognized.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that we, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, do hereby acknowledge the importance of celebrating Black History Month as an opportunity for all County residents to recognize the social, physical, and cultural contributions of Black Americans, and to reflect on the complex history of Albemarle County in order to create a stronger and more resilient community in the future.

Signed this 5th day of February, 2020

*Ned Gallaway, Chair
Albemarle Board of County Supervisors*