

# City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia  
Office of the Chief Clerk  
Room 402, City Hall  
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 260116)

## RESOLUTION

Recognizing and Celebrating The Philadelphia Heritage and Phila Montco Branches of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

WHEREAS, Black History Month recognizes the critical work of preserving, studying, and sharing the history and cultural contributions of African Americans, work that has been advanced for more than a century by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), founded in 1915 by historian and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson, widely regarded as the father of Black history; and

WHEREAS, In 1926, Dr. Woodson established Negro History Week during the month of February to promote the study of African American history, an observance that evolved into Black History Month and is now recognized nationwide; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Woodson emphasized that African American history is essential to understanding the full and accurate American story and should be taught to all Americans as a matter of public education and democratic responsibility; and

WHEREAS, When Dr. Woodson established Negro History Week, he recognized the importance of an annual theme to focus public attention and deepen understanding, a tradition that continues today through ASALH's nationally recognized role in setting the annual Black History Month theme; and

WHEREAS, The observance of Black History Month supports intergenerational learning by engaging youth, families, and elders in the shared study of African American history and civic life; and

WHEREAS, The 2026 Black History Month theme, "A Century of Black History Commemorations," will be observed beginning February 1, 2026, and continuing through January 31, 2027, marking the centennial of Negro History Week and the fiftieth anniversary of Black History Month, and will be carried forward through public programs, educational

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initiatives, and community events coordinated by ASALH's local, state, national, and international branches; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Heritage Branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is the oldest continuously operating branch of ASALH, co-founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, civil rights attorney Raymond Pace Alexander, and eighteen charter members of the Philadelphia community, and will observe this historic period as it prepares to celebrate its centennial on November 11, 2027; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Heritage Branch has played a distinguished role in the City's history, having hosted six ASALH national conventions beginning in 1924, produced early radio programming to educate the public on Negro History, and sustained a long tradition of historical and cultural programming serving the community; and

WHEREAS, The Phila Montco Branch of ASALH has, for more than twenty-five years, advanced similar work through expansive collaborations within Philadelphia's arts and education communities, including the establishment of a Freedom School in partnership with Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, As the City of Philadelphia commemorates its 250-year history, it is fitting to recognize that African Americans have been integral to the City's story across every century, from the enslaved Africans held at the President's House of George Washington on the grounds of what is now the Liberty Bell Center, to the courageous work of William Still and the Underground Railroad, the City's historic free Black population during the colonial period, the Great Migration, and the development of Negro History Clubs that evolved into the Philadelphia Heritage Branch of ASALH; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of this enduring legacy, the Philadelphia Heritage Branch and the Phila Montco Branch of ASALH, in partnership with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, will host a signature public program on February 22, 2026, serving as the official kickoff of Black History Month, featuring renowned historian Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, the reading of the 2026 Black History Month Proclamation, and the presentation of historical documents reflecting Black-led efforts to preserve community history; and

WHEREAS, Throughout 2026, both branches will also participate in citywide commemorations, including the Juneteenth observance at the African American Museum in Philadelphia on June 19, 2026, marking the Museum's fiftieth anniversary, the Pennsylvania 250th Anniversary Regional Black Cultural Heritage Fair on February 21, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Government recognition of Black History Month affirms the public responsibility to support historical accuracy, education, inclusion, and civic engagement, and to encourage all residents to engage with the full and shared history of our nation; now, therefore, be it

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RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors and celebrates the Philadelphia Heritage and Phila Montco Branches of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), and calls upon all residents, educators, institutions, and community organizations to observe Black History Month through reflection, learning, and participation in programs that honor the enduring legacy and contributions of African Americans to the City, the Commonwealth, and the nation.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the nineteenth day of February, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gilmore Richardson for Council President Johnson

Sponsored by: Council President Johnson, Councilmembers Gilmore Richardson, Phillips, Gauthier, Thomas, Landau, Lozada, Young, Harrity and O'Rourke