

CITY OF FRESNO

Office of Council Vice President Nelson Esparza

Is hereby presented in honor of:

Black History Month

- WHEREAS: February is nationally recognized as Black History Month, a time to honor the achievements, contributions, struggles, and resilience of African Americans throughout the history of the United States; and
- WHEREAS: The 2026 theme, “A Century of Black History Commemorations,” marks the historic 100th anniversary of Black History Month. This centennial theme encourages reflection on identity, culture, and the recognition of Black contributions to society. For the 100th theme, the founders of Black History Month invite us to explore the importance and meaning of Black history commemorations in transforming the position of Black peoples in the modern world; and
- WHEREAS: Black History Month originated in 1926 as Negro History Week, founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who sought to establish an organized, far-reaching, and sustained effort illustrating and honoring the contributions Black Americans have made to the culture, economy, science, arts, politics, and civil rights of the United States; and
- WHEREAS: The history of African American presence in Fresno dates back to the mid-19th century, with the 1850 census recording many Black families, including some who were runaway slaves but were all counted as United States citizens. By 1882, there was a large enough presence of Black families in Fresno to establish the Carter Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church, who had their first gathering at a home on F Street; and
- WHEREAS: Inspired by the collective vision of Leoria McLean and Nancy Whittle, the Taste of Freedom Project was established in 2023 by a dedicated group of community volunteers, including social workers, educators, artists, parents, community organizers, and living historians. The organization stands as a vibrant testament to the transformative power of collective vision and creative collaboration, weaving together art, history, and healing. Through exhibitions, performances, and workshops, the Taste of Freedom Project uplifts and honors community voices, ensuring that the richness of California’s cultural legacy continues to inspire and connect new generations; and
- WHEREAS: The 2026 honoree, Nancy Whittle, is a distinguished social worker and living historian. She coordinated and conducted most interviews for the *African American Voices* oral history project (2004–2006), preserving the stories of Central Valley elders and civic leaders. For over three decades, she has portrayed Harriet Tubman in Civil War reenactments across California, bringing this iconic freedom fighter’s legacy to life. Her contributions have been recognized with two Fresno NAACP Image Awards, the Fresno/Madera County Sheriff’s Award, and the Presidential Youth Service Award from President Bill Clinton in 1993, reflecting a lifetime of leadership and community impact.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that we, Mayor Jerry P. Dyer, Council Vice President Nelson Esparza, and the Fresno City Council, do hereby proclaim, February 2026, as:

“A Century of Black History Month”

in the City of Fresno.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands
and affixed the Seal of The City of Fresno, California, on this 19th day of February 2026.

JERRY P. DYER, HONORABLE MAYOR

NELSON ESPARZA, COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT DISTRICT 7

ANNALISA PEREA, COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 1

MIKE KARBASSI, COUNCIL PRESIDENT DISTRICT 2

MIGUEL ARIAS, COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 3

TYLER MAXWELL, COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 4

BRANDON VANG, COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 5

NICK RICHARDSON, COUNCILMEMBER DISTRICT 6