

CITY OF FRESNO

Office of Mayor Jerry P. Dyer



Honoring Kehinde Solwazi on His Retirement

WHEREAS, Professor Kehinde Solwazi was born in 1941 in Memphis, Tennessee and grew up in Kirkwood, Missouri, where he met his wife Kemisole; he has one son, Chuma, and is the proud grandfather of four. His love and devotion have been dedicated to African people and the celebration of everyday life throughout the African Diaspora; and

WHEREAS, pursuing his education with distinction, Professor Solwazi attended Harris Teachers' College in St. Louis on a Ford Foundation scholarship, earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1967 with emphasis on drawing, painting, and printmaking, and in 1972 a Master of Arts in Fine Arts with emphasis on Black Expressionism in the woodcutting technique from San Diego State University; and

WHEREAS, as a visual artist, Professor Solwazi draws inspiration from Orthodox Spiritual Systems in Ethiopia, the African Diaspora, and the glorification of war, which produced a socially conscious body of work; and

WHEREAS, Professor Solwazi worked nearly 40 years as a Fresno City College Social Sciences Division faculty member, where he built one of the Central Valley's most enduring African American academic programs. He also served as Chair of Cultural Studies and is recognized as the father of Fresno City's Black Studies Program; and

WHEREAS, as a community elder, Professor Solwazi strengthened Fresno's African American community through the Black Political Council, United Black Men, and the Fresno City College Black Faculty Association. Upon Professor Solwazi's retirement, he established the Kehinde Solwazi Scholarship at Fresno City College – a living legacy that supports and empowers young Black students in pursuit of higher education; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fresno is proud to honor Professor Solwazi, whose life of scholarship, artistry, and community service helped shape the city's character and culture.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, Mayor Jerry Dyer and Members of the Fresno City Council, do hereby proclaim Thursday, May 21, 2026, to be:

“Kehinde Solwazi Day”

In the City of Fresno.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and affixed the seal of the City of Fresno, California, this 21st day of May 2026.

JERRY P. DYER, Honorable Mayor

NELSON ESPARZA, Council President

TYLER MAXWELL, Council Vice President

ANNALISA PEREA, Councilmember District 1

MIKE KARBASSI, Councilmember District 2

MIGUEL ARIAS, Councilmember District 3

BRANDON VANG, Councilmember District 5

NICK RICHARDSON, Councilmember District 6