



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH
SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
PROCLAMATION

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WHEREAS, in 1976, as Americans celebrated the national bicentennial, President Gerald Ford urged the Nation to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history” and, for the first time, Black History Month was celebrated nationwide; and

WHEREAS, President Ford’s words rang true to the Nation, and in that spirit we recognize and celebrate the incredible roles African Americans have played in Alaska’s history and their many contributions to the wellbeing of our State; and

WHEREAS, the theme of Black History Month 2025, "African Americans and Labor", focuses on the various and profound ways that work and working of all kinds – free and unfree, skilled, and unskilled, vocational and voluntary – intersect with the collective experiences of Black people; and

WHEREAS, the strong and positive influence that African Americans have had on our State started long before statehood as African American men migrated to Alaska to work as whalers, fur traders, and eventually gold miners; and

WHEREAS, we have long benefited from the contributions of outstanding African American men and women, including Willard Bowman, who moved to Alaska after serving in the U.S. Navy, was appointed the first Director of the Alaska Human Rights Commission in 1963, and later served three terms in the Alaska House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, this month we honor our African American neighbors, their accomplishments and contributions, and celebrate the distinct influence they have on the cultural fabric of our Great State.

NOW THEREFORE, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Board of Education joins the State of Alaska and does hereby proclaim February 2025 as:

Black History Month

and encourages all Alaskans to recognize the continuing impact African Americans have on our State and the lasting contributions they bring to the success of our communities.

Dated this 12th day of February

By Michelle O'Brien, President,
Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Board of Education