

2020 FEB 13 PM 4:07

Approved as to Form and Legality


City Attorney's Office

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY VICE MAYOR LARRY REID, COUNCILMEMBER LYNETTE
GIBSON MCELHANEY, AND COUNCILMEMBER LOREN TAYLOR

**RESOLUTION IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH
HONORING COURAGEOUS BLACK INDIVIDUALS AND
ORGANIZATIONS, WHO THROUGH THEIR INNOVATIVE,
GROUNDBREAKING WORK, HAVE PROMOTED POSITIVE CHANGE
AND UPLIFT FOR THE CITY OF OAKLAND**

WHEREAS, The individuals and institutions we honor today have made significant contributions to the City of Oakland, through their dedication to the celebration, expansion, and preservation of the unique contributions of African Americans and these historic contributions are woven into the fabric of American history in the City of Oakland, the United States and the world; and

WHEREAS, District 1 is honoring **Marcus Books**, the historic black-owned bookstore on Martin Luther King Jr. Way in North Oakland founded by Dr. Julian Richardson and Dr. Raye Richardson that established its Oakland location within District 1 in 1970s to serve as a sanctuary and a resource center for the Black community to gain knowledge to feel confident in fighting back against racial inequality. During the Black Power and Black Arts movement, Marcus Books was an important meeting place and lecture room for the Black Panthers. Over the years, Marcus Books has hosted such legends as Rosa Parks, Angela Davis, Bobby Seale, Muhammad Ali, Maya Angelou, Barry White, B.B. King, and Pattie LaBelle. Marcus Books has also been the chosen meeting place for the Black Firefighters Association, the Association of Black Police, the Black Nurses Association, and many more organizations. Daughters Blanche and Karen Richardson now operate the Oakland pillar that continues to thrive and keep up with community engaging traditions by hosting events, supporting local artists and Black authors; and

WHEREAS, District 2 is proud to honor long-term resident **James Vann**. James is the co-founder of the Oakland Tenants Union (OTU) who continues to monitor the needs of renters through local and state legislation and is the go-to expert in the City of Oakland on those issues. He has also consistently advocated for the local control of our resources, including but not limited to pushing hard for the public use of public land. In addition to advocating for tenants who are 60% of our city, he spearheaded the Coalition of

Advocates for Lake Merritt (CALM) which developed Measure DD, the improvements for the "Jewel of Oakland" Lake Merritt, and watchdogs its implementation as the father of the Green Pedestrian Bridge. When the affordable housing crisis was brewing, he had already been fighting for housing as a human right for decades. He tirelessly responds to individual tenants in distress while working to build coalitions in Oakland and Alameda County that bring residents together to fight for a real social safety net. He has proven time and again that he has never been afraid to speak for unpopular causes if they benefit the average Oaklander. As the homelessness crisis grew in Oakland, James helped to found another organization, the Homeless Advocacy Working Group (HAWG), that currently advocates for policies that offer real alternatives to the growing number of encampments and dignity to those forced to live on our streets. He is a hero to many and a gracious advocate to all; and

WHEREAS, District 3 is honoring: **Kin Folkz** who is an award-winning educator, human rights activist, author, and community organizer. Kin Folkz founded Spectrum Queer Media in 2009 which is an internationally recognized Oakland based LGBTQIA rights, media, and creative arts advocacy organization promoting social justice and voice for marginalized LGBTQIA people and their allies. Kin is also celebrated for their work as a co-founder of Oakland Pride and as the creator of the Oakland Pride Creative Arts & Film Fest, the Oakland Pride Run, Ball and Wellness Expo, and the Queer Art Crawl celebrating queer and trans people of color Oakland artists. Kin also founded or leads numerous efforts promoting self-care and justice for queer and trans people such as the Omni, the Oakland Queer + Trans Open Mic, and the Transgender and Intersex Justice Project. As a spirit-gender, queer, Black Indigenous, autistic, Elder-In-Training, parent with Lupus, Kin is a sought after diversity, inclusion, and equity workshop leader and panelist. Kin has been recognized internationally for their work as a catalyst for positive social change through the arts and is contributing closer to home by opening Oakland's very first LGBTQIA Arts Center and Gallery in March 2020; and

WHEREAS, District 4 is honoring: **Bertram Harris** who has worked in Oakland for the past decade as a Designer and Building Contractor, designing and building Accessory Dwelling Units. Bertram currently works with Redesign2Renovate, a member of the U.S. Green Building Council. Mr. Harris was born and raised in Indiana before moving to the Bay Area and finally settling in Oakland. He realized the potential for unused spaces in yards to become a creative solution to create more housing by building Accessory Dwelling Units. Bertram has designed, built, and renovated Accessory Dwelling Units in Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley, Foster City, Harbor Bay, and Hillsborough. His work has taken him all over the Bay Area, and he has immersed himself in many Bay Area communities. In addition to designing Accessory Dwelling Units, Mr. Harris has advised clients on how to overcome funding challenges to complete a new Accessory Dwelling Unit, creating more housing options for community members based in Oakland; and

WHEREAS, District 5 is honoring: **The Konte Family** - Keba, Rachel and family members. Owners of Red Bay Coffee and two other Oakland businesses. Red Bay Coffee Roasters was founded in 2014 by Keba Konte, a renowned artist and successful food entrepreneur with deep roots in the San Francisco Bay Area specialty coffee and hospitality industry. Red Bay Coffee seeks to create unity by hiring and

serving people of all backgrounds, striving to be diverse and inclusive of those who have traditionally been left out of the specialty coffee industry, especially people of color, the formerly incarcerated, women and people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, District 6 is proud to honor the life and work of **Arthur "Art" Bolden Shanks II**, founder of the Cypress Mandela Training Center. He was raised in Oakland, California along with his four brothers and two sisters. Art had three children with his high school sweetheart and one child with his current wife, Linda Shanks, and two grandchildren. Art was the recipient of numerous awards and was recognized for his work in the community. He was featured in many news broadcasts and in many written publications. He was not a believer of mediocrity or status quo and he confronted challenges with courage, determination, perseverance and consistency. While he had a heart of compassion, he was not afraid to speak his mind and at times it was his way or the highway. Learning and education were also ingrained in his life passion as the Executive Director of the Cypress Mandela Training Center for 26 plus years. The Cypress Mandela Training Center is a pre-apprenticeship program for the trades that places the underprivileged and underrepresented into meaningful jobs so that they may positively maneuver in society. As the founder of Cypress Mandela, it was his duty to ensure that the students were given the best opportunities he and his staff could provide. He believed that life skills were equally as important as the trades training. Art passed away on December 29, 2019. He will be missed but his legacy will not be forgotten; and

WHEREAS, District 7 is proud to honor **Ile Omode School**, an independent African centered institution whose mission is to give birth to the natural genius in every child while maintaining the best traditions of their ancestors has been providing an exceptional educational experience for black families for over 30 years. Grounded in the belief that every child deserves a quality education, the members of Wo'se Community Church established Ile Omode as a manifestation of kujichagulia, self-determination. Ile Omode School is committed to high academic standards, cultural authenticity, family and community, and the divine within. Ile Omode School stresses the development of their students' bodies, minds, souls, and consciousness. Serving students from preschool to 8th grade, their students are among the top performers in high school and college. Ile Omode graduates boast a 100% private high school acceptance rate. Their programs include advanced mathematics, STEM, computer technology, health & wellness, and cultural performing arts. Starting in preschool, culture and technology is integrated into the curriculum. During middle school, every student participates in a college tour to Washington, DC and Georgia. Ile Omode School has exposed nearly 200 students to Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Their college preparatory curriculum is deeply rooted in a cultural authenticity that endeavors to bring the very best out in every child. Ile Omode's vision is that their students become highly motivated and creative leaders who are both capable and committed to the betterment of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the At Large Office recognizes that on November 18, 2019, the **Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment** led a statewide week of housing action which began with nonviolent civil disobedience that included Black mothers, known as Moms 4 Housing, with the steering committee of Misty Cross, Carroll Fife, Sameerah Karim, Tolani King, Merika Regan, Sharena Thomas, and Dominique Walker, who moved their children into a vacant house on Magnolia Street in West

Oakland to highlight the trauma of homelessness and housing insecurity, the inequities of housing access, and the human cost of displacement caused by real estate speculation; and to make real that housing is a human right; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Libby Schaaf's Office honors **Donald Oliver**. He was an Oakland principal who founded the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Oratorical Festival in 1978. In creating the Oratorical Festival, Mr. Oliver provided an opportunity for students to showcase their intellect, learn in a unique environment, and celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Mr. Oliver understood that public oratory required students to think quickly and use many different aspects of their education. Mr. Oliver also believed that public speaking allowed his students to demonstrate their intellectual skills in a more personalized manner than in the classroom. Donald Oliver passed away in 2010, yet as the Oratorical Festival moves into its 42nd year, his great impact on the City of Oakland endures. Continuing Mr. Oliver's work, Awele Makebe has been the of director of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Oratorical Festival for the last 5 years. Ms. Awele is the Drama Director at Skyline High School has sought to honor the principles of Dr. King by encouraging her students to explore social justice issues and the role of ordinary people in those issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the City of Oakland hereby honors and commends the following individuals and organizations in recognition of Black History and Heritage Month 2020:

- Marcus Books
- James Vann
- Kin Folkz
- Bertram Harris
- The Konte Family
- Arthur Shanks
- Ille Omede School
- Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment
- Donald Oliver

and be it;

FURTHER RESOLVED: That these Black individuals and organizations are recognized for their courageous spirits, their innovation to address community challenges, and their steadfast commitment to social change, which have yielded great results that have strengthened, enhanced, and improved the City of Oakland and the lives of all its residents.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FORTUNATO BAS, GALLO, GIBSON MCELHANEY, KALB, REID, TAYLOR, THAO AND
PRESIDENT KAPLAN

NOES -

ABSENT -

ABSTENTION -

ATTEST: _____

LATONDA SIMMONS
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California