



CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER BROWN, COUNCILMEMBER FIFE,
COUNCILMEMBER KAPLAN, AND COUNCILMEMBER RAMACHANDRAN

**RESOLUTION IN CELEBRATION OF MARCH 2025 AS WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH AND HONORING WOMEN WHO HAVE
DEMONSTRATED EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP AND WHOSE
CONTRIBUTIONS TO OAKLAND HAVE MADE A LASTING POSITIVE
IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, Women's History Month recognizes the contributions of women in our society and honors the leadership, courage, ambition, creativity, and dedication of women whose achievements have strengthened our communities. This month celebrates women who have reached the height of their profession, have made groundbreaking discoveries, have led movements, and have made a difference, whether at the community level or the global level; and

WHEREAS, we especially recognize women who have excelled in the face of racism, xenophobia, classism, ableism, transphobia, and homophobia in addition to sexism and misogyny; and

WHEREAS, Oakland's history and present are filled with women whose leadership in public service, arts, education, business, science, technology, community organizing, and other fields is a core part of what makes our city vibrant today and sets the foundation for an even brighter future; and

WHEREAS, in celebration of Women's History Month, we honor the following outstanding women whose contributions have made a lasting positive impact in Oakland; and

WHEREAS, the At-Large Office is proud to honor Joyce Gordon, the founder and owner of the Joyce Gordon Gallery in Oakland. For over two decades, Joyce Gordon has curated an art gallery designed to give Oaklanders from all walks of life access to fine art. She has hosted hundreds of exhibitions that reflected the social and cultural diversity of the Bay Area and international artists, as well as events spanning poetry, dance, theatre, lectures, and more. Through her Joyce Gordon Foundation of the Arts, she has also created programming for underserved youth, including an annual youth art festival. These programs show our youth the power of art as a pathway for expression. Ms. Gordon has done incredible work to make both exhibiting and enjoying art accessible for everyone in Oakland. Her gallery has been a space to showcase art, and even more powerfully it has been a cultural hub for our community. Ms. Gordon's retirement

marks a transition from the day-to-day work that she has done skillfully for years, but the example that she has been of what it means to be committed to the wellbeing of Oakland will continue to resonate. Joyce Gordon is a truly exceptional woman, and deserves to be honored; and

WHEREAS, District 1 would like to honor Erica Siskind, who has served as a children's librarian with the Oakland Public Library for 30 years, beginning as a Library Aide in 1989 and earning a Master's degree in Library and Information Sciences from San Jose State University. Erica has been with the Rockridge Branch since its opening in 1996 and is a resident of District 1. Erica is dedicated to connecting people of all ages with library resources, practicing kindness, and embracing collaboration to serve the diverse community. At Rockridge Library, Erica leads story time, reader's advisory, Chess Club, and other programs, while also managing library collections to ensure resources meet community needs. Erica is passionate about lifelong learning and supports the development of the community, especially its youngest members and their caregivers. Erica's enthusiasm for the library is evident in the positive feedback from patrons who benefit from the invaluable resources available to them. District 1 recognizes Erica Siskind for her 30 years of dedicated service to the Oakland Public Library and her significant contributions to the community; and

WHEREAS, District 2 honors Billie J. Simmons, the founder and President of Community Action Alliance, and a long-time community servant and organizer. She has developed and run programs through the Agnes Memorial Church for over 30 years, including the Agnes Memorial Preschool, Women and Children Transitional Housing, and the Agnes Memorial Food Program. Simmons holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dramatics and Speech and a minor in Secondary Education from Fisk University in Nashville, TN. She is also an Early Childhood credential holder. Billie was born and raised in Oakland. The eldest daughter of her family, she grew up listening to her father, Toby Gene Levingston, and his brothers plan community events to improve the quality of life of Oakland residents. This heritage is the impetus for her stalwart work to develop senior housing on the site that the Agnes Memorial Church partially occupies. The senior housing development is a long-term project that is underway and, when completed, will strengthen the community and serve as a beacon of light and compassion for our most vulnerable. In addition to her love for the community, she is actively pursuing her passion as an actor and singer. She is in pre-production for the film adaptation of her father's memoir, "Soul on Bikes," which chronicles his life and creation of the motorcycle club East Bay Dragons. She was nominated for Actress of the Year for her work in Color of Autumn at the 2024 Austin Revolution Film Festival. Billie's generosity of spirit and commitment to those in need in District 2 make her a treasured leader in the City of Oakland and our honoree for Women's History Month; and

WHEREAS, District 3 is proud to honor Carol H. Williams, owner and Chief Executive Officer of Carol H. Williams Advertising, one of the most successful marketing firms in the nation. Ms. Williams started her distinguished career at Leo Burnett Company in Chicago, becoming their first African American Female Creative Director and Vice President. After 13 years at Leo Burnett, she served two years as Senior Vice President, Creative Director at Foote, Cone & Belding in San Francisco. In 1989, she founded Carol H. Williams Advertising and grew it into a powerhouse that has produced award-winning advertising and marketing campaigns for many Fortune 500 companies, including General Motors (Cadillac), General Mills, Kraft, Gilead Sciences, HP, Nationwide Insurance, Procter & Gamble, the U.S. Army, The Walt Disney Company, Marriott, and more. Ms. Williams has received countless recognition and awards for her outstanding work, including being inducted into the American Advertising Federation's Advertising Hall of Fame in 2017 and receiving the New York Women in Communications (MATRIX) Award and the

Advertising Age Vanguard Award in 2020. Along with her innumerable professional accomplishments, Ms. Williams uses her talents and resources for philanthropic endeavors, including the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, the Congressional Black Caucus, NAACP, U.S. Dream Academy, National Newspaper Publishers Association, and numerous local community organizations. We celebrate having a visionary and impactful business leader in Oakland's Council District 3; and

WHEREAS, District 4 honors Elizabeth Stage, who has lived in Oakland since 1979 and has been dedicated to education, public safety, and community advocacy. Elizabeth earned a national reputation in teacher development, student assessment and educational equity – particularly in the fields of science and mathematics. Elizabeth committed herself to educating new generations of Bay Area residents as Director of the Lawrence Hall of Science at UC Berkeley. Elizabeth has championed lifesaving wildfire prevention, preparedness, and advocacy efforts on behalf of all Oakland residents through her service as President of the Oakland Firesafe Council. Elizabeth led efforts to pass Measure MM, which will fund Oakland's Vegetation Management Plan and drastically reduce the risk of wildfires in the Oakland hills. Elizabeth has represented broad community interests through her service on the North Hills Community Association and the Claremont Canyon Conservancy; and

WHEREAS, District 5 honors Maria Sanchez, a devoted Oakland resident and an iconic community leader in the Fruitvale District, who has spent the past 35 years working tirelessly to uplift and empower the Latino community by fostering economic development, cultural preservation, and neighborhood beautification. Throughout her tenure as The Unity Council's Business Improvement District Manager, she has connected countless minority-owned small businesses with vital resources for sustainability and growth, while also spearheading events like the Summer Night Markets to promote local shopping and strengthen community ties. Recognizing the importance of a clean and safe environment, Maria has dedicated herself to organizing neighborhood cleanups and beautification projects, instilling a sense of pride among residents with her belief that "if the neighborhood is clean and looks pretty, people will take care of it because they will feel proud of the place where they live". Prior to her impactful work with The Unity Council, Maria served as a Health Promotora for La Clínica de La Raza, where she educated families on nutrition, safety, and communication through Casa CHE (Community Health Education), furthering her commitment to community well-being. Her influence extends beyond economic and health initiatives, as she played an instrumental role in launching the Fruitvale Día de los Muertos Festival 22 years ago, helping to establish a now-beloved cultural tradition that continues to thrive. Maria's lifelong dedication to Fruitvale is a testament to her unwavering service, leadership, and commitment to improving the lives of those around her; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the Mayor is proud to honor champions of education and affordable housing with Patricia Wells, Executive Director of the Oakland Housing Authority, and Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson, Chancellor of the Peralta Community College District. Patricia Wells has dedicated her career to advancing fair housing opportunities and advocating strongly on behalf of Oakland's most vulnerable residents. Through her persistent dedication, innovative leadership, and thirty years of public service, Patricia Wells has made a profound and lasting difference in the lives of thousands of individuals and families across Oakland. Dr. Gilkerson has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to equity, social justice, and student success throughout her nearly two decades in community college leadership, advocating for historically marginalized students and communities. Dr. Gilkerson's leadership has been instrumental in addressing students' basic needs and fostering multiracial coalitions to promote educational opportunity. In recognition of their

extraordinary dedication and commitment Oakland's communities, the Office of the Mayor honors Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson and Patricia Wells during this Women's History Month; and

WHEREAS, District 7 is proud to honor Sister Brittia Johnson. She is a pillar in the community and the true definition of "making a way out of no way." Sister Johnson supports many organizations and strives to uplift everyone around her. Her daughter, Euniece Law, was deeply involved in community work until her passing. In her honor, Brittia founded Euniece Law: The Legacy Continues to carry on that work. Most would have every reason to pause their philanthropic efforts after such a loss, but for Brittia, it became the fuel that kept her going—or, in her own words, God. We do not always understand life, but one thing is certain: Brittia Johnson has provided necessities and more to over 100,000 people in Oakland through Euniece Law: The Legacy Continues. Thank you, Brittia, for forty years of incredible work – including eighteen years running the nonprofit – that you have allowed God to call you to. We are sure that both God and your baby, NeeCee, are smiling upon you; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the City of Oakland recognizes March 2025 as Women's History Month and honors these women for their exceptional achievements, perseverance in the face of adversity, and commitment to strengthening and uplifting our communities.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROWN, FIFE, HOUSTON, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, UNGER, AND
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE GALLO

NOES –

ABSENT – COUNCIL PRESIDENT JENKINS (serving as Mayor pursuant to Charter Section 303)

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____

ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

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