

2025 Black History Month Proclamation

February is Black History Month, first proposed as Black History Week by scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1926 to chronicle the rich history and contributions of Black Americans. The 2025 theme of Black History Month, “African Americans and Labor,” highlights the transformative contributions of Black Americans in the workforce. The theme celebrates resilience, innovation, and contributions that have inspired progress and deeply impacted our country in every industry from agriculture to aerospace.

Understanding the impact of Black labor in America is paramount to understanding the life and history of Black people in America. The exploitation and enslavement of Africans brought to the Americas by European countries, and later the United States government, deeply permeates many aspects of Black history and labor. Despite this exploitation and injustice, the African American labor force contributed significantly to our nation’s infrastructure and industrialization.

We recognize the impact of African Americans in the workforce as revolutionaries and trailblazers. From the prosperity of “Black Wall Street” to inventions like the mailbox, traffic light, golf tee, and thermostat, African Americans in the labor force have had a profound impact on the economy of this nation.

2025 also marks the 100-year anniversary of the creation, by labor organizer and civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph, of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids, the first Black union to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor.

As Governor Gavin Newsom noted in his 2025 Proclamation honoring Black History Month, “From labor leaders to essential workers to CEOs, Black Californians have helped make this state the fifth-largest economy in the world, (and) a leader in workers’ rights.”

In Alameda, several African Americans are honored through the naming of prominent spaces, including Ruby Bridges Elementary School, Littlejohn Park and Littlejohn Commons, the Don Grant Track & Field, Stargell Commons, and the Albert DeWitt Officers Club.

Now, therefore, I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, hereby proclaim February 2025 as

Black History Month

in the City of Alameda and encourage the community to reflect on the centuries-long struggles and successes of Black Americans whose transformative contributions in the workforce have shaped our shared history and paved the way for a future defined by unity and progress.

Alameda residents can learn more about the rich history and contributions of Black Americans by attending events hosted by the Alameda Free Library, both the Main Library and Bay Farm Island Library, including:

Friday, February 7, 3:30 pm at the Main Library – Learn about artist, activist, and writer Faith Ringgold as you create a *Paper Story Quilt* inspired by Ringgold’s picture book, “*Tar Beach*”

Monday, February 10, 7 pm at the Bay Farm Island Library – A family storytime highlighting the work of Ashley Bryan

Thursday, February 13, 3:30 pm at the Main Library – Learn about African American astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson as you create your own DIY Planetarium

Saturday, February 15, 2 pm at the Main Library – *With One Voice*, an afternoon of song with the Grammy-winning Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir

Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 pm at the Main Library – a screening and discussion of the documentary film *Strange Fruit: The Biography of a Song*, exploring the history and legacy of jazz singer Billy Holiday’s classic song

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

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Mayor

