

Proclamation for AANHPI Heritage Month, May 2024

Whereas, May is National Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month and this year's theme is "Bridging Histories, Shaping Our Future;" and

Whereas, immigrants from AANHPI nations came to this country with hopes and dreams of building new lives for themselves and their families, overcame countless obstacles, including racist exclusion, language and cultural differences, and the denial of citizenship, to see members of succeeding generations become pillars of their communities, and;

Whereas, during AANHPI Heritage Month we pay homage to some of California's earliest immigrants, including those who came from China to work in the Gold Rush and help build the Transcontinental Railroad. We also highlight the rich tapestry of AANHPI cultures and acknowledge the legacies, triumphs, and challenges that have shaped their respective communities, including Filipino farm and cannery workers who joined with other immigrant groups to form unions and lead strikes, forging intergenerational connections that honor the past and pave a durable path to the future; and

Whereas, today 27 percent of Bay Area residents—just over two million people—identify as Asian American or Pacific Islander, second only to the Honolulu metro area, and AANHPIs are the fastest-growing demographic in the nine-county Bay Area; and

Whereas, individuals of AANHPI descent currently comprise more than 32 percent of Alameda's population and include business owners, educators, elected officials, lawyers, judges, artists, clergy members, health care professionals, military personnel, first responders, essential workers, service providers, laborers, and more; and

Whereas, despite their immeasurable contributions to this country, AANHPIs have experienced the trauma of racism, harassment, and hate crimes since their earliest arrivals, which intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we celebrate AANHPI Heritage Month, we must also acknowledge our nation and our City's own dark history of racism and exclusion. In Alameda, individuals of AANHPI heritage were prohibited from living or operating businesses in many areas of the City, and in 1942 during World War II, Japanese Americans from Alameda were the first in the nation to be evacuated to internment camps, and Alameda's once-thriving Japantown neighborhood was erased; and

Whereas, today we reaffirm that there is no "safe harbor" for hate in Alameda, or this nation, that every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and that individuals of AANHPI heritage who come from countries and cultures spanning thousands of miles and centuries-old heritages contribute to the rich ethnic and cultural composition of the United States, and demonstrate the truth that diversity is our Nation's greatest strength.

Now, therefore be it resolved, that I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, do hereby proclaim May 2024 as

Asian American-Native Hawaiian-Pacific Islander Heritage Month

in the City of Alameda and encourage all Alamedans to learn more about the remarkable history of AANHPIs, including by visiting markers that bring awareness to the long-hidden history of Alameda's Japantown and learning more about Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander history and culture by viewing related books, films, and other resources at the Alameda Free Library.

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor, City of Alameda