

RESOLUTION NO. 78

DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 2024 AS “AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH” IN ALBANY COUNTY

Introduced: 2/12/24

By Clay, Efekoro, Fein, Simpson, Robinson, McLaughlin and Willingham:

WHEREAS, This month Albany County will join citizens from around the nation to commemorate African American History Month and pay tribute to the determination and triumphs of African Americans throughout our Country’s history and the legacy of their experience, and

WHEREAS, Albany County, along with the nation, has selected “African Americans and the Arts” as its theme for the 2024 observance of African-American History Month, and

WHEREAS, African American art is infused with African, Caribbean, and the Black American lived experiences, contributing significantly to visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, culinary, and other forms of cultural expression, and

WHEREAS, African American artists have used art to preserve history and community memory as well as for empowerment, leading significant artistic and cultural movements such as the New Negro, Black Arts, Black Renaissance, hip-hop, and Afrofuturism, setting the standard for popular trends globally, and

WHEREAS, The contributions of people of African descent to the arts and history have been historically denied or minimized, but we recognize the unbroken chain of Black art production from antiquity to the present, revealing a rich history across continents, and

WHEREAS, The suffering of those in bondage gave birth to spirituals, the nation’s first contribution to music, and Blues musicians such as Robert Johnson, McKinley ‘Muddy Waters’ Morganfield, and Riley “BB” B. King created and nurtured a style of music that became the bedrock for gospel, soul, and other still popular and evolving forms of music, and

WHEREAS, Black contributions to literature include works by poets like Phillis Wheatley, essays, autobiographies, and novels by writers such as David Walker and Maria Stewart, with aesthetics also manifested through sculptors like Edmonia Lewis and painters like Henry O. Tanner, and

WHEREAS, Afrofuturism, defined approximately 30 years ago, envisions a future for Black people without oppressive systems, exploring the intersection of Black history and knowledge with technology and science, with examples found in the works of artists like Sun Ra, Rashan Roland Kirk, Janelle Monáe, and Jimi Hendrix, as well as sci-fi writer Octavia Butler's novels, Marvel film Black Panther, and other artists such as Lina Iris Viktor, Wangechi Mutu, Nalo Hopkinson, and Grace Jones, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By this Honorable Body that February 2024 is hereby designated as African-American History Month in Albany County, focusing on the theme "African Americans and the Arts," and all citizens of Albany County are encouraged to reflect upon the rich history of African Americans in the arts; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the County Legislature is directed to forward certified copies of this resolution to the appropriate County Officials.