

Black (African American) History Month: February 2010

To commemorate and celebrate the contributions to our nation made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week. The first celebration occurred on February 12, 1926. For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. Each year, U.S. presidents proclaim February as National African-American History Month. - *U.S. Census Bureau*

In the centuries since African Americans first arrived on our shores, they have known the bitterness of slavery and oppression, the hope of progress, and the triumph of the American Dream. African American history is an essential thread of the American narrative that traces our Nation's enduring struggle to perfect itself. Each February, we recognize African American History Month as a moment to reflect upon how far we have come as a Nation, and what challenges remain. . . . This month, we recognize the courage and tenacity of so many hard-working Americans whose legacies are woven into the fabric of our Nation. We are heirs to their extraordinary progress. . . . I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

- *President Barack Obama, Proclamation, 2010*

Special thanks to the Black History Month Committee members

City of Saint Paul

Habtamu Awetu, Albert Boney, Angela Burkhalter, YaYa Diatta, Courtney Anderson-Ewald, Paul Gertsen, Norma Haddad, Dave Hunt, Pattie Kelley, Natasha Murphy, Angela Nalezny, Alyssa Wetzel-Moore, Benny Williams, Bev Wittgenstein,



Ramsey County

Marisol Chiclana-Ayala, Kathy Henderson, Jonna Shelomith

Lunch catered by RJ's House of Foods

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The City of Saint Paul
and Ramsey County
Employee Celebration

Black History Month

The Long Arc of Progress

*I know you are asking today, how long will it take?
How long? Not long, because the moral arc of
the universe is long but it bends toward justice.*

- *The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
March from Selma to Montgomery, 1965*

*"Dr. King once said that the arc of the moral
universe is long but it bends towards justice.
It bends towards justice, but here is the thing:
it does not bend on its own. It bends because
each of us in our own ways put our hand
on that arc and we bend it in the direction
of justice ..."*

- *Sen. Barack Obama
April 4, 2008*



February 26, 2010

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

**Historic
City Hall/Courthouse
Lower Level - 40A & B**



City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County
Employee Celebration of Black History Month

The Long Arc of Progress

Welcome

*Mistress of Ceremonies: Commissioner Toni Carter,
Ramsey County Board of Commissioners*

Invocation

*Ronald Fulford, Elder,
House of Praise, Church of God in Christ*

Musical Selection

"Lift Every Voice and Sing," The Negro National Anthem

Reading of the Official Proclamations

*Kathy Lantry, Council President, Saint Paul City Council
Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Chair,
Ramsey County Board of Commissioners*

Guest Presentation

Josie R. Johnson, Human Rights and Social Justice Advocate

Entertainment Performance

*Debbie Duncan and the Debbie Duncan Trio
Yolanda Wilks, Spoken Word, "Wise Men"*

Closing Remarks

Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter

Lift Every Voice and Sing

*Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.*

*Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.*

*Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered;
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.*

*God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou Who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou Who hast by Thy might, led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, Where we met Thee.
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee.
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.*