Proclamation

CITY OF RACINE, WISCONSIN

Whereas: Juneteenth, officially known as Juneteenth National Independence Day, holds significant importance in the United States. Juneteenth celebrates the end of slavery and freedom for African Americans. The name is derived from the combination of "June" and "nineteenth" signifying the date when the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas was issued after the conclusion of the American Civil War; and

Whereas: President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. The proclamation declared that the 3 million slaves living in the Confederate States were free; and

Whereas: On June 19, 1865 – over 2 years after President Lincoln declared enslaved persons free, Major General Gordon Granger and Union Army troops marched into Galveston, Texas to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. They freed over 250,000 Black Americans, the last enslaved people in Texas; and

Whereas: Opal Lee is an American retired teacher, counselor, and activist in the movement to make Juneteenth a federally recognized today. Lee campaigned for decades to make Juneteenth a holiday. At the age of 89, she conducted a symbolic walk from Fort Worth, from which she departed in September 2016, to Washington, DC, where she arrived in January 2017; and

Whereas: In June 2021, at the age of 94 Lee's efforts succeeded when a bill to make Juneteenth a federal holiday was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden. She was an honored guest at the bill signing ceremony. In May 2024, Opal Lee was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian honor.

Whereas: On Juneteenth, we renew our commitment to promoting fairness, equal opportunity, and just treatment for all.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor Cory Mason, proclaim June 19, 2024, in the City of Racine, Juneteenth Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have here unto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Racine to be affixed.

Accomplished at the City Hall
this 4th day of June 2024.

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Mayor