



## PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, over at least three centuries, approximately eleven and one-half million Africans were enslaved, often separated from their family members, transported like cargo and forced to endure horrendous conditions on slave ships during a sometimes months-long journey to this country; and

**WHEREAS**, the brutal conditions on board, and the prospect of even worse treatment in the future, influenced many captives to dive overboard with their children to certain death, while those who survived the journey were often subjected to whipping, castration, branding and rape, and forced to submit to a life of slavery; and

**WHEREAS**, for almost 400 years after the original slaves arrived in the lands that would become the United States, they and their ancestors were forced to live lives of servitude, considered chattel, and the value of their labor was stolen from them; and

**WHEREAS**, events in the history of the United States that led to the Civil War of 1861 centered around differences between those who wanted to maintain an economic system and culture based on slavery, and those who believed all people are created equal, everyone has an inherent right to freedom, and all people should be treated with dignity and respect; and

**WHEREAS**, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring the slaves in Confederate territory free and paving the way for the passing of the 13th Amendment, which formally abolished chattel slavery in the United States, but did not abolish the institutionalized slavery that incarcerated persons are to this day still subjected to in some states; and

**WHEREAS**, word about the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation did not reach some authorities and African-Americans in the South and Southwestern United States for some two and one half years, with Texas, due to the low number of Union Troops in the area to enforce the Proclamation, being the primary location where slaves were not notified of their freedom until Major General Gordon Granger and his regiment arrived in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865 and gave notice to all that the war had ended and the slaves were free; and

**WHEREAS**, Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the abolition of chattel slavery in the United States and the emancipation of African American slaves throughout the Confederate South; and

**WHEREAS**, recent events demonstrate, more than 150 years after the abolition of chattel slavery in the United States, there are still numerous violent acts and prejudice perpetrated against people of color every day, and there is much work to be done to stop pervasive, long-standing and devastating injustices; and

**WHEREAS**, it is important to both honor and celebrate the abolition of chattel slavery in the United States, and to also commit to act each and every day to understand the lasting impact slavery has on this country, and to work actively to overcome the continuing discrimination against people of color in this country.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jennifer Carroll, Mayor of the Town of Erie, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2020 as Juneteenth as a reminder of the horrendous history of slavery in this country, a celebration of the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation, and a commitment to actions needed to overcome the continuing prejudice and discrimination that exists throughout the United States, and I urge all residents to respect and honor our diverse community and celebrate and build a culture of inclusiveness and acceptance in which everyone feels safe.

**DATED THIS 9<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2020**

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**Jennifer Carroll, Mayor of the Town of Erie**

**ATTEST:**

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**Heidi Leatherwood, Town Clerk**