



*"The Peak of Good Living"*

# TOWN OF APEX NORTH CAROLINA

## *Proclamation*

### **Black History Month 2025**

*from the Office of the Mayor*

WHEREAS, The Town of Apex recognizes and honors the rich cultural heritage and significant achievements of Black Americans and individuals of African descent, whose legacies have profoundly shaped our town, state, and nation; and,

WHEREAS, Black History Month, observed annually in February, offers an opportunity to reflect on the contributions, sacrifices, and enduring impact of Black Americans in all aspects of society, including civil rights, science, education, arts, business, and public service. The first celebration of Black History dates back nearly 100 years to 1926, when Carter G. Woodson sought to celebrate and honor the Black Americans who have helped to create the country we have today, despite the immense mistreatment they have endured throughout history; and,

WHEREAS, The Town of Apex acknowledges that Black history is American history, and it is vital to ensure that the stories and experiences of Black Americans are remembered, honored, and shared as an essential part of our collective identity; and,

WHEREAS, Apex has deep roots in Black History, as many influential Black individuals have helped to shape our Town: Clarice Atwater was the first Black, Female Commissioner to serve on the Town's Board of Commissioners from 1981 through 1993; Whalen Matthews was the first Black business owner to own and operate a business in Downtown Apex; and John Wayne Beckwith became the first Black Police Officer to serve in the Apex Police Department; and,

WHEREAS, Other prominent Black individuals in Apex's history include Sarah and Reverend William Davis, who were considered voices of hope for the Black community in Apex, and Abraham and Correna Justice, who developed their land in order to provide homes for the Black community in what became known as Justice Heights, so named in honor of their generosity and selflessness. These individuals, among countless others, helped pave the way for future generations to be comprised of leaders from all races and backgrounds in our town; and; and,

WHEREAS, Our town is home to several historically Black churches that have served Apex and our community of people in numerous ways, including Christian Home Christian Church, St. Mary's AME Church, and Apex First Baptist Church. These churches have served as a safe place to worship, pray, and be a beacon of hope of many believers over the years; and,



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WHEREAS, The Town of Apex is incredibly proud of its Black community leaders, many of whom have come together to bring significant celebrations of Black history and culture to Apex, such as the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Committee, and the Juneteenth Committee. These celebrations bring Apex together and enhance our historical and cultural understanding; and,

WHEREAS, Throughout the month, the Town will celebrate Black History Month with educational programs and cultural events to honor the past, inspire the present, and build a future that reflects the ideals of justice, equality, and opportunity for all; and,

WHEREAS, While progress still remains in the journey for this future, the Town of Apex is committed to doing its part in lifting up individuals and organizations who seek to advocate and fight for advancements toward racial equality in our nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jacques K. Gilbert, Mayor of Apex, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim the Month of February, 2025, "Black History Month" in the Town of Apex, and encourage residents to remain open-minded in learning more about Black history, and join me in committing to a more inclusive future for all, in our Town and beyond.

I hereby set my hand and have caused the Seal of the Town of Apex, North Carolina, to be affixed this the 28<sup>th</sup> day of January 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacques K. Gilbert".

Jacques Gilbert, Mayor

