



City of Mercer Island, Washington

Proclamation

JUNETEENTH 2021

WHEREAS, each year, June 19 commemorates the traditional observance of the end of slavery in the United States, and is called "JUNETEENTH" combining the words June and Nineteenth; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring the slaves in the Confederate territory free, paving the way for the passing of the 13th Amendment which formally abolished slavery in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, word about the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation was delayed some two- and one-half years, until June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the end of both the Civil Wars and slavery, by stating: "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free"; and

WHEREAS, the following year, the first official Juneteenth celebrations took place in Texas and have continued across the United States for over 150 years; and

WHEREAS, on this day, people in communities across the country come together to acknowledge the painful history and lasting, systemic impact of slavery and racial injustice in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Governor Jay Inslee signed House Bill 1016 on May 13, 2021 declaring Juneteenth a new legal State Holiday, effective in 2022; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is an opportunity to recommit to the goal of creating a more equal and just society.

NOW, THEREFORE, I Benson Wong, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2021 as

JUNETEENTH

in Mercer Island and encourage residents to join in this observance and celebration of African American freedom.

APPROVED, this 1st day of June 2021.

Benson Wong, Mayor

Proclamation No. 272

