



# City of Mercer Island, Washington *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS**, Since 1654 when the first Jewish people landed on the shores of New Amsterdam, which would become the United States, the Jewish community has significantly contributed to the founding, growth, prosperity, and enrichment of our nation.

The first wave of Jewish American settlers arrived in the Northwest in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. By 1889, when the Washington Territory became the forty-second state in the Union, Jewish citizens and their businesses had been contributing to the development of this state for four decades. Washington's early Jewish history includes a Territorial Governor, state legislators, and several Jewish mayors.

Mercer Island is the proud home of one of Washington State's largest Jewish populations and to several Jewish institutions and organizations. Jewish Americans have made significant contributions to the Mercer Island community.

The narrative of Jewish Americans is a pivotal chapter in the broader American story, contributing significantly to the religious, cultural, political, economic, and intellectual life of our nation.

The Jewish community has been an integral part of the Mercer Island community for many years. Jewish festivals and events educate and enrich the cultural landscape of Mercer Island, bringing together people of all backgrounds to celebrate the Jewish religion, heritage, and culture.

Last year, the Anti-Defamation league tracked over 400 incidents of antisemitism in the State of Washington, including four on Mercer Island. Despite facing ongoing challenges of antisemitism, hatred, and discrimination, Jewish Americans strive for a more inclusive and equitable society.

We stand united with individuals of all faiths and backgrounds in denouncing bigotry and hatred, promoting values of equality, compassion, and tolerance, and committing to eradicating prejudice wherever it is found. Jewish American Heritage Month offers a valued opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate Jewish heritage, thereby fostering understanding and respect, which are essential in combatting antisemitism.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Salim Nice, Mayor of the City of Mercer Island, do hereby proclaim May 2024, as

## **Jewish American Heritage Month**

in the City of Mercer Island and urge all to recognize this observance, celebrate the contributions of our Jewish community, and continue to work towards a society that reflects the dignity and worth of every community member and work diligently against antisemitism and all forms of hatred.

**APPROVED**, this 21st day of May 2024.

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Mayor Salim Nice

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