

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

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Sponsor(s): Senator White, Senator Gerling-Perez, Senator Jacobs, Senator Hubbard, Senator Jones, Senator Amaefule, Senator Kariuki, President Arriaga, Speaker Cockrell, Vice President Craig, Chief of Staff Gonzalez, Director Lopez, Director Rodgers, Senator Salcedo, Senator Szell, Senator Kashika, Senator Chowdhury, Senator Nieto

Committee: Student Life

Draft: Vote

The African American Recognition and Commemoration Resolution

Whereas, Kamala Harris made history as the first Female and African American Vice President of the United States shattering a glass ceiling and showing little brown girls across the United States that anything no matter the color of one's skin or one's gender is impossible for one to accomplish;

Whereas, Barack Obama made history as the first African American President of the United States by championing major legislation such as the Affordable Care Act expanding healthcare for millions without, the Repealing of Don't Ask Don't Tell allowing members of the LGBTQ to serve in our nations armed forces without threat, and the establishment of DACA a program allowing for immigrants to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred deportation for employment and education;

Whereas, Sheila Jackson Lee was a campaign of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in the United States House of Representatives fighting for equal justice not only here but abroad, and also successfully led the charge to make Juneteenth a federal holiday;

Whereas, Beyoncé a Houston Native singer, songwriter, and businesswoman made history as well as is now regarded as one of the most influential figures in music history. Beyoncé has received numerous awards for his songs and now holds the title of the most-awarded female artist of all time having sold over 200 million records worldwide, she is one of the best-selling music artists of all time as well. Beyoncé was the first African American woman to win the Songwriter of the Year award from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. Beyoncé has won 32 Grammys making her the most honored individual by the Grammys as well as she is the most nominated Grammy artist with 88 nominations. Beyoncé has also won 30 MTV Video Music Awards, 36 BET Awards, 24 Soul Train Music Awards, and 25 NAACP Image Awards. Beyoncé has also been involved in activism and politics such as teaming up with other celebrities in 2012 to pressure the federal government to take action on gun violence following the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting, she spoke out against anti-LGBTQ legislation in North Carolina, condemned police brutality against black Americans, advocated against the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin, performed America the Beautiful at the Inauguration of Barack Obama in 2009 the first African American President and raised 4 million dollars for his reelection campaign, and lastly campaigned for Vice President Kamala Harris during the 2024 election pushing for the first African American Female President.

Whereas, Ketanji Brown Jackson made history as the first African American woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court under President Joe Biden following over 200 years of the institution being in the United States;

Whereas, Hiram R. Revels of Mississippi made history as the first African American elected to the United States Senate in 1870 and fought for equality under the law as well as for the integration of schools in the United States;

Whereas, Joseph Hayne Rainey of South Carolina made history as the first African American elected to the United States House in 1870 and the second African American in Congress after Hiram Revels. He fought to promote the Southern Economy following the Civil War and for the reintegration of the South into the main United States;

Whereas, Carol Moseley Braun made history as the first African American Woman elected to the United States Senate making prominent steps fighting for women's rights, gun control legislation, and voting for NAFTA;

Whereas, Thurgood Marshall made history as the first African American Supreme Court Justice where before he worked for the NAACP where he fought and championed major legal wins including the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education which successfully overturned the doctrine of separate but equal eliminating segregation in public schools;

Whereas, Shirley Chisholm made history as the first black woman elected to Congress as well as also was the first black candidate to seek the nomination of a major political party for President of the United States. Throughout her career she made a stand and fought against economic, social, and political injustices;

Whereas, Maya Angelou was an African American poet who fought for women's rights and equal justice through her writings. Maya Angelou was later awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011 as well as became the first black woman to be depicted on U.S. currency;

Whereas, John Robert Lewis was a civil rights activist who served as the 3rd chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee worked with figures like MLK, and participated in marches like the March to Montgomery in Alabama. John Lewis fought for equal rights and the rights of African Americans to vote in elections without infringement. John Lewis later went on to serve in the US House of Representatives for over 30 years and was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama in 2011;

Whereas, Ruby Bridges was a civil rights activist and was the first African American child to attend a formerly whites-only school in Louisiana. Due to the tension brought by that decision Ruby as well as 6 other black children had to be escorted by U.S. Marshalls to school for years following their first day;

Whereas, Madam C.J. Walker made history as America's first female self-made millionaire. Walker made her fortune by developing and marketing a line of cosmetic

and hair care products made for black women through a business she founded. To this day Madam C.J. Walker is considered one of the wealthiest black women in U.S. History;

Whereas, Martin Luther King (MLK) changed history for future generations in the black community by in his words “causing good trouble”. By using the power of peaceful protest to strive for changes in the United States. He staged bus boycotts, Sit-ins, and marches such as the March to Montgomery Alabama where he gave a speech in front of Dixiecrat Georgia Wallace’s Office, and the March on Washington where he gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech speaking out against racial segregation and discrimination. MLK spoke at churches such as when he gave his I’ve Been to the Mountaintop speech. MLK was awarded the Noble Peace Prize for his actions;

Whereas, Elizabeth “Bessie” Coleman made history as the first African American woman to hold a pilot's license as well as the earliest known black person to earn an International pilot's license. Bessie then went on to perform notoriously dangerous air shows in the United States later earning her name “Queen Bess”;

Whereas, Langston Hughes was an African American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist. Hughes was one of the early innovators of what is now called jazz poetry and was a prominent leader in the Harlem Renaissance. Throughout Hughes's writings he advocated for African American people as well as fought for people of African descent and people in Africa to take pride in diverse black cultures across the globe despite geological barriers;

Whereas, Nina Simone was an American Singer, songwriter, pianist, composer, arranger, and civil rights activist. She did a lot of activism through her songs which included genres of classical, folk, gospel, blues, jazz, R&B, and pop. One example of Simone's activism through her songs would be her performance of the song Mississippi Goddam which was her response to the murder of Medgar Evers a civil rights activist and NAACP chapter member in Mississippi and the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama which killed four young black girls and blinded a fifth. Simone's works also include other songs such as the now popular and covered song Feeling Good. Simone was later awarded the Grammy Hall of Fame Award, the Lifetime

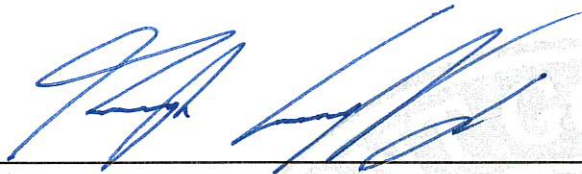
Achievement Award by the Irish Music Hall of Fame, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by fellow R&B artist Mary J. Blige, and in 2019 her first activist song Mississippi Goddam was selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the National Recording Registry for being culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant;

Whereas, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was a civil rights organization formed to advance justice for African Americans. The mission of the organization is to “ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination”. The NAACP advocates via pathways of political lobbying, publicity, and litigation strategies on behalf of black people. Some actions taken on behalf of the NAACP include the litigated case Brown v. Board of Education, a challenge against Guinn v. United States which established the discriminatory grandfather clause in voter registration, and Moore v. Dempsey which expanded the federal court's oversight of state criminal justice systems;

Whereas, there are other significant African American activists, singers, songwriters, poets, and organizations that are worth recognition yet now in modern history racial disparities are becoming more prominent not only through the general public but also through Congress and State Legislatures such as in Florida with House Bill 7 titled the Stop Wrongs To Our Kids and Employees Act dubbed the “Stop WOKE Act” which included setting new standards for the teaching of African American history stating that black people benefited from slavery from being taught useful skills. In Congress with the rollback of subcommittees such as the Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties disbanded by the Republican speaker in the 118th Congress. The rollback of DEI initiatives to promote equal employment practices, the rollback of affirmative action no longer allowing for equal opportunities for colored communities in prestigious higher education situations, and the rollback of a 60-year executive order requiring employment opportunities in all government contracting industries just to name a few.

Therefore, be it resolved by the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

That the SGA appreciates and recognizes the fights, activism, and continued relentless efforts put forth by the African American community from past and present to not only improve the lives of the black community within itself but to also improve the lives of others fighting for equal justice and liberty for all striving the leave the world and people better off then what was afford them themselves in the past.



Tavagoh Cockrell

Speaker of the Senate

Date of Senate Approval: 03/20/20
2/19/25