

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

PROCLAMATION NO. _____

Proclaiming June 19th, 2018 as Juneteenth Day in Multnomah County.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

1. Juneteenth is the annual observation recognizing the Emancipation Proclamation, which occurred on January 1, 1863 but all remaining slaves in Texas received the news on June 19th, 1865. On this day 42 states in the US including the District of Columbia celebrate the abolition of slavery which gave all slaves freedom and equal rights. This day is also known as Freedom Day and Emancipation Day and is heavily recognized in African American communities nationwide. Juneteenth celebrates the end of slavery; not the day slavery ended. "Delayed emancipation was not caused by not-knowing; the culprit was lack of enforcement." (<http://portlandobserver.com/news/2018/may/23/juneteenth-origin-debunked/>). We celebrate Juneteenth because it was the beginning of freedom and abolition of slavery for African Americans in the United States.
2. Juneteenth was mostly celebrated in the south but over the years has grown to be acknowledged across many states. However, it is still not considered a National holiday and there is a current campaign advocating for June 19th to be observed nationally.
3. Juneteenth was first celebrated here in Multnomah County in 1945 when Clara Peoples organized the very first event. Traditionally, the celebration of Juneteenth kicks off with the Clara Peoples Freedom Trail Parade, followed by a community festival. This is a time to celebrate and honor African Americans freedom with an emphasis on education and achievement.
4. Juneteenth became a statewide holiday here in the State of Oregon in 2001 when Clara Peoples and Woody Broadnax worked with Senator Avel Gordly to have Juneteenth recognized in Oregon as a statewide day of Observance and declaration. Juneteenth is to be a day for celebration statewide of the dignity, worth, and freedom of all citizens.
5. Multnomah County takes this opportunity to celebrate Avel Gordly. In 1996 she made history by becoming the first African American woman sworn in as an Oregon State Senator. It was then a few short years later in 1999 when Avel became the chief petitioner for the constitutional amendment that removed the state's black exclusion laws from Oregon records.
6. Avel's passion for social justice, holistic health, and "beloved community", shows up in her public service and community relationships.
7. In addition to a public service career in politics and criminal justice, for over 40 years Avel has been an activist, educator, advocate for social justice and mental health services. She advocated for the de-stigmatization of mental health services and in 2008, OHSU opened up the Avel Gordly Center for Healing, which provides culturally specific mental health and psychiatric services.

8. Avel has received numerous awards from groups such as the YMCA of Greater Portland, the NAACP, the Oregon Youth Authority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the Girl Scouts, and the Oregon Commission for Women; and in 2017 she received an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from her alma mater Portland State University.

9. Juneteenth gives us an opportunity to highlight the many accomplishments and contributions of community activists such as Avel Louise Gordly who speaks to the essence of “beloved community” where all people have a place and all people matter.

10. Avel Louise Gordly has made policy changes on behalf of all Oregonians. She has inspired thousands of community members, faith leaders, youth, and many others. Her compassion and empathy for others and her steadfast advocacy and leadership have given others encouragement and hope; and her example has shown us the true meaning of servant leadership.

11. Multnomah County adheres to the values and activities espoused by community members such as Avel Gordly

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:

June 19th, 2018 as Juneteenth Day in Multnomah County, Oregon.

ADOPTED this 14th day of June, 2018.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Deborah Kafoury, Chair

REVIEWED:
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By:

Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Commissioners Loretta Smith, District 2