

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Opal Lee, a retired teacher and counselor and the “grandmother of Juneteenth”, has had a lifelong commitment to make Juneteenth a national holiday and celebrate the freedom of African Americans in our country; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth's commemoration is on the anniversary date of the June 19, 1865 announcement that proclaimed freedom for slaves in Texas, the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery; and

WHEREAS, Opal Lee campaigned for decades, promoting the idea to make Juneteenth a United States holiday by leading 2.5 mile walks each year, representing the 2.5 years it took for news of the Emancipation Proclamation to reach Texas; and

WHEREAS, this culminated in 2016 when Opal Lee, at 90, formed an awareness campaign to walk across the nation, leaving Fort Worth in September 2016 and arriving in Washington, D.C. in January 2017; and

WHEREAS, in June 2021, Opal Lee's efforts came to fruition when a bill to make Juneteenth a federal holiday was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden; and

WHEREAS, Opal Lee, by encouraging national leaders to recognize and acknowledge the great strides that have been made in the crusade to celebrate freedom, is the pioneer of this American holiday.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jim R. Ross, Mayor of the City of Arlington, Texas, and on behalf of the Arlington City Council, do hereby proclaim July 18, 2021, as

OPAL LEE DAY

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City to be affixed this 18th day of July in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty-one.



MAYOR