



# Tompkins County Legislature

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## PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, people of African descent have been an integral part of United States history and experience for over four centuries, yet Black history has often been suppressed or unrecorded, and

WHEREAS, 2026 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first formal national celebration of Black History, then as Negro History Week, planned by Dr. Carter G. Woodson and what is now the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), and

WHEREAS, 2026 is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first U.S. Presidential recognition of February as Black History Month, and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Black History Month is to use historical study and education to transform the lives of Black people today and into the future. Dr. Woodson wrote, “If a race has no history...it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated,” and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County is rich with local Black history, including the St. James African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, which has been active for 193 years, longer than any other Ithaca church, and served as a station on the Underground Railroad visited by many prominent abolitionists; Southside Community Center, located in the historically Black Southside neighborhood and dedicated to empowering and affirming the Black American residents of this region for the past 89 years; and the founding of Alpha Phi Alpha, the oldest historically Black collegiate fraternity, at Cornell University in 1906, and

WHEREAS, countless Black people have shaped this region in ways famous and unrecognized and continue to do so today, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins County Legislature does hereby proclaim the month of February 2026, as

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

in Tompkins County.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Shawna Black, on behalf of the Tompkins County Legislature, have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the great seal of Tompkins County, State of New York, on this the 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.

Shawna Black, Chairwoman  
Tompkins County Legislature