



Proclamation

WHEREAS, Carter G. Woodson, born to formerly enslaved parents, founded Black History Week in 1926, stating, "Those who have no record of what their fore parents have accomplished, lose the inspiration which comes from the teachings of biography and history." Woodson studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, earned his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of Chicago, and earned his PhD in History at Harvard University in 1912; and

WHEREAS, February is recognized throughout the United States of America as Black History Month in honor and recognition of the many contributions made by Black Americans and Black American Organizations. Commemoration of Black History Month serves as a reminder of the importance of teaching the history of those who came before us; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Rosa wants to highlight the little known story of John Richards, who secured his own freedom in the early 1850's. He moved to Santa Rosa in 1856 and purchased land encompassing the thirty square blocks, now known as South Park. The 130 acres served as a refuge for former slaves left homeless after emancipation; and

WHEREAS, local historian, Gaye LeBaron describes Richards as, "a successful entrepreneur, [who] operated a barber shop on the corner of Second and Main Streets, next to Santa Rosa House, the town's hotel and stage shop. Richards prospered. His barbershop became the social center of the community. He opened similar businesses in Ukiah and Lakeport. His and his wife Philena's household was a haven for freed slaves during and after the Civil War. Richards was well respected, and at the time of his death, in 1879 he was honored with a large funeral with burial in the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery."

WHEREAS, the story of John Richards and other Black Trail Blazers is recorded, compiled and published by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to provide insight and understanding and inspiration to all students of history.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that, I, John Sawyer, Mayor of the City of Santa Rosa, on behalf of the entire City Council, grant recognition to John and Philena Richards as historical inspiring Trail Blazers and commend their community service during

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Mayor John Sawyer
February 2, 2016