



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
LA CROSSE

WHEREAS, in spite of the United States Declaration of Independence proclaiming, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, *that all men are created equal*, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness;” that goal, after more than 200 years, has yet to be fully realized; and

WHEREAS, since the time of the Native Americans until today, the La Crosse "history book" contains a lot of good people that called this home, but there are also some chapters in the "book of life" for which we cannot be proud and for which we should apologize; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Crosse has our own tumultuous history, with incidents of discrimination against people in accommodations, and in equal opportunities for housing and jobs based on their race, color, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, marital status, physical appearance, political activity and familial status; and

WHEREAS, historically some of our citizens and institutions actively discouraged – often by social and cultural means – members of non-white racial and ethnic groups, particularly African Americans, from settling and living here including “sundown town” activities – where members of non-white racial groups were discouraged from being within the city limits after “sundown;” and

WHEREAS, healthy people and healthy communities are able to recognize their past mistakes, admit when they have been wrong and resolve to ensure equality for all people; and

WHEREAS, La Crosse – by the strength, determination and resolve of its people – has made great strides in eliminating discrimination and in promoting racial equality – as symbolized by establishing the Human Rights Commission, our welcoming of the Hmong people to our community, our rapidly growing African American population, supporting Pridefest, and the racial and socio-economic integration of our La Crosse School District and more; and

WHEREAS, the City of La Crosse, our Human Rights Commission and community members, businesses and institutions are working together to tell the compelling stories of our increasingly diverse community – including acknowledging our community’s failings – all for the good of La Crosse now and in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, TIM KABAT, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LA CROSSE, AND JOHN MEDINGER, FORMER MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LA CROSSE do hereby proclaim that we the undersigned:

- Acknowledge and apologize for the sometimes racist, discriminatory and exclusionary aspects of La Crosse’s history, along with the pain and suffering these practices caused.
- Resolve to follow the example and counsel of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by examining our own hearts today, then seeking to eliminate from our thoughts, words, and actions all racism, prejudice, and discrimination – replacing those negative characteristics with the positive attributes of acceptance, compassion, and a spirit of love.
- Commit to becoming an uncommonly great community and a beacon of hope through our advocacy for equality and justice for all.
- Pledge to work toward the common good in building a warm and welcoming community, where all people of goodwill – regardless of race, color, gender identity or expression, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, marital status, physical appearance, political activity and familial status – can live, be free, and pursue happiness.

Dated on this 8th day of December in the year of our Lord Two Thousand Sixteen.

MAYOR TIM KABAT

MAYOR JOHN MEDINGER

And including the undersigned community members: