

# Proclamation

## **A Proclamation Commemorating Black History Month, and the Contributions of Monessen's Black Community.**

**WHEREAS**, Since the founding of our City, Monessen's Black community has excelled in contributing to the progress of our City and our Nation, by their exemplary resolve in rising above all obstacles and highlighting the strength and grit that is found in a Monessenite, and;

**WHEREAS**, Emancipation Day, now known as Juneteenth, was celebrated in Monessen by the African American community in the early years of the twentieth century, with parades, a Queen, and lectures along with a reading of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and;

**WHEREAS**, in 1900, the Wayman Chapel Historical Literary Society was the first literary group formed in Monessen, and;

**WHEREAS**, in 1901, the African Americans of Monessen formed the Afro-American League, and;

**WHEREAS**, in 1901, the African Americans formed the John M. Langston Social and Political Club in Monessen, and;

**WHEREAS**, in 1903, the Pittsburgh Steel Company's "colored" ball team, named the Giants, was formed, and;

**WHEREAS**, in 1904, the African American business community of Monessen formed the Progressive Business Association, and;

**WHEREAS**, in 1909, the Monessen Choral and Literary Club was formed to promote the study of literature and music among the African American's in Monessen, and;

**WHEREAS**, one hundred years ago, in 1921, the African American veterans of the Great War formed a Black American Legion in Monessen, and;

**WHEREAS**, in 1929, the Mon Valley NAACP was officially formed, and;

**WHEREAS**, in the 1930's, Page Park, Monessen's Minor League Baseball Field, regularly hosted Negro League games, and;

**WHEREAS**, on July 24, 1938, Josh Gibson of the Homestead Grays hit one of the longest homeruns of his career, at 536 feet, out of Page Park in Downtown Monessen, in a game between the Homestead Grays and the Memphis Red Sox, and;

**WHEREAS**, Edgar Duncan was Monessen High School's first African American Valedictorian; He was also the first African American Graduate from Duquesne University's Pharmacy School, as well as the first African American graduate of the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health. He later became the first Black Assistant United States Surgeon General, and;

**WHEREAS**, Michael Moorer graduated from Monessen High School in 1987 and went on to become a three-time heavyweight champion, and successfully defended his light heavyweight title nine times. He also fought matches in Korea, New Zealand and others. He won his biggest match against Evander Holyfield in 1994, and;

**WHEREAS**, Charel Allen, graduated from Monessen High School in 2004, and attended Notre Dame University. She played professional basketball in Bulgaria for 8 seasons, and also 1 season in Turkey. She is currently the Girls Basketball Coach at California State University, Fullerton, and;

**WHEREAS**, Ben Jones, graduated from Monessen High School in 1962, where he helped to lead Monessen's 1961 Championship team to victory. The team's lineup included Eric Crabtree, Bill Malinchak, and Tony Vitale. 'Bantam Ben' went on to the University of Cincinnati on Scholarship, and was inducted into the Mid-Mon Valley Sports Hall of Fame in 2012, and;

**WHEREAS**, Eric Crabtree, graduated from Monessen High School in 1966, studied at the University of Pittsburgh, and went on to play in the National Football League, for the Denver Broncos, the Cincinnati Bengals, and the New England Patriots, and;

**WHEREAS**, Michael Bright, graduated from Monessen High School, where he led Monessen's basketball team to their first-ever Championship. He went on to study at Bucknell University, where he was a Hall of Fame Basketball player. He now serves as the President and CEO of the YMCA of Newark, New Jersey, and;

**WHEREAS**, Denis Barton, graduated from Monessen High School in 1971, and studied at Michigan State University and Georgetown University Law Center. She served as judicial clerk for Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Manderino and recently served as an Assistant Attorney General in Michigan, where she focused on Civil Litigation, Employment, and Elections, and;

**WHEREAS**, Moylan Turner, Jr. graduated from Monessen High School in 1986, and retired as a Sergeant First Class, Military Specialist, Detailed Recruiter, and Military Police (Military Occupational Specialty), and;

**WHEREAS**, Monessen's Black Community has been and continues to be heavily involved in the progress of our City, and plays a vital role in the fabric of our City's identity.

**NOW THEREFORE**, I, Matthew T. Shorraw, Mayor of the City of Monessen, do hereby commemorate this Black History Month, and the contributions made by all people of color, not only in Monessen, but also across our Commonwealth and our Country. For, Black History is American History.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Shorraw".

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Matthew Shorraw  
Mayor, City of Monessen