PROCLAMATION
FLORIDA EMANCIPATION DAY
MAY 20, 2021

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing enslaved people in the rebelling Southern states, announcing "That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free...."; and

WHEREAS, it was more than two years later at the end of the Civil War, on May 20, 1865, that Union Brigadier General Edward M. McCook announced in Tallahassee, Florida the freeing of the state's African slave population. On that same day, Special Order Number 63 arrived from Major General Quincy A. Gillmore, and stated that "the people of the black race are free citizens of the United States"; and

WHEREAS, newly freed slaves celebrated this announcement with a picnic at Bull's Pond, which is located in Tallahassee and today called Lake Ella; and

WHEREAS, for decades after the initial proclamation, African-American communities across the state carried out celebrations as a way of both honoring the past and celebrating the present. While the end of slavery in Texas is commonly observed as the end of slavery in the U.S. and celebrated as "Juneteenth." Florida's own day provides an opportunity to honor the history of, and continued fight for freedom for, historically marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, Emancipation Day helps shed light on the continuing challenges our country faces in combatting racism, inequity and inequality.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, EULA R. CLARKE, Mayor of the City of Stuart, Florida do hereby proclaim May 20, 2021, as:

FLORIDA EMANCIPATION DAY

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Stuart, Florida to be affixed this 10th day of May, 2021.

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EULA R. CLARKE
MAYOR