

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, George Washington, starting as a young man, chose to live at Mt. Vernon with his stepbrother Lawrence and called Alexandria his hometown, where he assisted in surveying our streets, bought property, built a house, conducted business, caught up on local news, drilled his troops in Market Square and bade a final farewell to them from the steps of Wise's Tavern; and for many years enjoyed shopping, dining, dancing, playing cards, and celebrating important events in Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, George Washington was a visionary citizen who made numerous contributions to our city such as helping to found and endow the Alexandria Academy, including funding scholarships for girls at a time when few provided academic opportunities for them; and

WHEREAS, George Washington donated generously to enhance public safety and to support several local churches, including St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church (now the Basilica of Saint Mary), and regularly attended Christ Church where he owned a pew; and

WHEREAS, George Washington is honored as the father of our country because of his exemplary contributions to the American Revolution as Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces, his service as president of the Constitutional Convention and his unanimous election as first President of the United States of America; and whom his close Alexandria friend Gen. "Light-Horse" Harry Lee called "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen"; and

WHEREAS, the George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee was established by City Council to plan and carry out the annual George Washington Birthday Celebration on behalf of, and officially sponsored by, the City of Alexandria to show our affection, respect, and gratitude to this hero; and

WHEREAS, the George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee supports a variety of events throughout the month of February celebrating the life of George Washington. This year's events include the annual Birthnight Banquet & Ball at Gadsby's Tavern Museum (hosted virtually this year); the Cherry Challenge Contest supported by Alexandria's local restaurants; George Washington's Alexandria walking tours of Old Town outdoor sites; a ceremony honoring the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolutionary War; webinars with Washington to learn about his life, and an outdoor scavenger hunt for families and friends of all ages to find clues throughout the City of Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, this year the George Washington Birthday celebrations will be dedicated to the late Joe Shumard, who served on the George Washington Birthday Celebration Committee since 1994 and led the committee for many years between 1999 until 2020; and who is known throughout the City of Alexandria for his civic activism with organizations like the Office of Historic Alexandria, First Night Alexandria, Scottish Walk Parade, Rotary Club of Alexandria Central, Senior Services, and the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association; and

WHEREAS, these events may be enjoyed by all citizens and visitors to our City.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JUSTIN M. WILSON, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, do hereby proclaim the month of February to be:

"GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION MONTH"

In honor of the 289th birthday of our country's first President who was born on February 22, 1732.

FURTHER, I hereby welcome all visitors to our City and urge everyone to attend and enjoy these unique activities offered during the month of February.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria to be affixed this 9th day of February, 2021.

MAYOR JUSTIN M. WILSON
On behalf of the City Council
of Alexandria, Virginia

ATTEST:

Gloria A. Sitton, CMC City Clerk