



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Montgomery County Declares Juneteenth An Official Holiday *All County Offices and Facilities Will Be Closed on June 19, 2020*

Norristown, PA (June 17, 2020) – Montgomery County offices and facilities will be closed to the public on Friday, June 19, to observe Juneteenth, the oldest known celebration honoring the end of slavery in the United States.

“Montgomery County embraces diversity and inclusion and believes that all are valued and welcomed,” said Dr. Valerie A. Arkoosh, Chair, Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “The events of the past few weeks have shown us that ending systemic racism is a goal we must continue to strive for in all sectors of society. We are committed to that effort and building a deeper connection with our communities here in Montgomery County.”

On this day in 1865, Union Army General Gordon Granger read federal orders in Galveston, Texas, that all previously enslaved people in Texas were free – more than two years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Texas was the most remote of the Confederate states, and the last place the Emancipation Proclamation issued 2.5 years earlier was enforced. However, this was not the end of slavery in the United States. People enslaved in Union-held territory were not freed until the passage of the 13th Amendment several months later on December 18, 1865.

“June 19 is especially significant at this moment. It is an important date in our history and a milestone to the end of slavery in the Confederate states that went against our founding ideals of freedom and liberty,” said Kenneth E. Lawrence Jr, Vice Chair, Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “Though slavery was abolished, the system of racism and oppression that provided the premise for the horrific treatment of Black people during those times has persisted until today. We are working together to break the systems of inequality and to achieve equity and inclusion.”

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