

STATE OF NEW YORK
LEGISLATURE OF ERIE COUNTY
BUFFALO, NY, JUNE 3, 2021

***Recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre &
Honoring Black Wall Street Week (May 31st - June 7th)***

WHEREAS, at the turn of the 20th century, the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma, became one of the first communities in the country thriving with Black entrepreneurial businesses; and

WHEREAS, the prosperous town, founded by the descendants of slaves, earned a reputation as "Black Wall Street" and became a harbor for African Americans in the highly segregated city of Tulsa, which was governed under Jim Crow laws; and

WHEREAS, this year, May 31st 2021, marks the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre and the destruction of "Black Wall Street"; and

WHEREAS, a mob of white attackers killed hundreds of Black Americans and burned down several blocks of Black-owned buildings, businesses, and homes that made up Black Wall Street; and

WHEREAS, in order to understand the Tulsa Race Massacre, it is important to understand the complexities of the times such as Jim Crow, jealousy, white supremacy, and land lust, all played roles in leading up to the destruction and lives lost on May 31 and June 1, 1921; and

WHEREAS, although the exact total can never be determined, credible evidence makes it probable that hundreds of Black people were killed during the massacre; and

WHEREAS, despite being numerically at a disadvantage, black Tulsans fought valiantly to protect their homes, their businesses, and their community; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, 75 years after the massacre, a bipartisan group in the state legislature authorized the formation of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921; and

WHEREAS, three known survivors of the attack on Black Wall Street, Viola “Mother” Fletcher, Lessie Benningfield “Mother” Randle, and Hughes Van Ellis appeared before a congressional committee, and a Georgia congressman introduced a bill that would make it easier for them to seek reparations; and

WHEREAS, currently, there are only a few Black businesses on the single remaining block in the Greenwood district once hailed as the Black Wall Street; and

WHEREAS, this week across the globe, community leaders and groups are holding ceremonies and activities celebrating Black business leaders, black business districts and future plans for development in the spirit of Black Wall Street; and

WHEREAS, today, we honor the legacy of the Greenwood community and of Black Wall Street, by confirming our promise to advance racial justice through our community and working to root out systemic racism through our efforts, our policies, and our sentiments.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body applauds Dewitt Lee III and The Black Wall Street Week Committee for their commitment and dedication to reach out throughout our community to eliminate systemic racism, and to help rebuild communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body thanks and extends our appreciation to all local leaders and organizations for their contributions to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre and honor this week as Black Wall Street Week.

Hon. Howard J. Johnson Jr.
Erie County Legislator, 1st District

Hon. April N.M. Baskin
Erie County Legislator, 2nd District