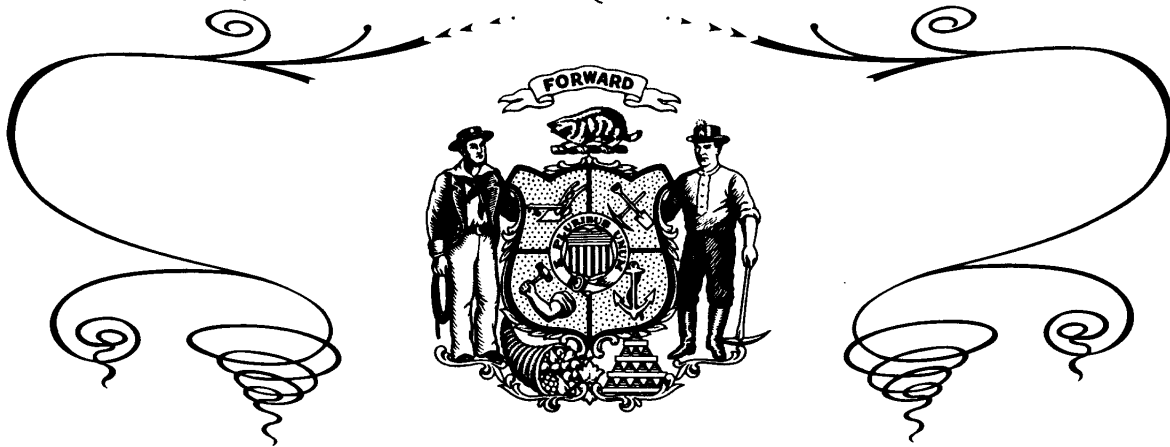


State of Wisconsin



1997 Assembly Joint Resolution 98

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: designating Buffalo Soldier Day.

Whereas, the month of February is designated as Black History Month across the United States, a month to honor the accomplishments of our nation's African-American ancestors; and

Whereas, our country's Black "Buffalo Soldiers" and those who have followed in their legacy have served in, and fought heroically in, the U.S. Armed Forces in every major conflict but have largely escaped public acknowledgment and recognition; and

Whereas, legend provides that the first Buffalo Soldiers were so named by Native Americans, due to their fierce fighting spirit reminiscent of the revered Great Buffalo; and

Whereas, in 1866 the U.S. Congress created 6 Black regiments: the 9th and 10th U.S. Cavalry and the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st U.S. Infantry, who were the first Buffalo Soldiers. In 1869 the 4 infantry units were reduced to 2: the 24th and 25th. These units were entrusted with the protection of the Western settlements and railroad workers, charged with the building of roads and telegraphs, and made responsible for discovering and mapping huge plots of unexplored territory in the Southwestern United States, earning 24 Medals of Honor during their tenure; and

Whereas, nearly 200,000 Black Americans served in the Union Army during the Civil War, 33,000 of them dying on Civil War battlefields; and

Whereas, nearly 400,000 Black Americans served in World War I, and many of them compiled an enviable record of courage, valor and bravery in the first all-Black unit, the 92nd Division, and the regiments of the 92nd — the 369th, 370th, 371st and 372nd regiments — these Black American soldiers were awarded over 550 Croix de Guerres, France's highest award for bravery, but not a single Congressional Medal of Honor by this country, until President Bush awarded the only one to Corporal Freddie Stowers of the 371st Infantry on April 24, 1991, posthumously; and

Whereas, over 1,000,000 Blacks served during World War II, including those who served in the Red Ball Express Truck Company, the 555th Parachute Infantry Company and the 92nd Infantry Division, remaining largely segregated and unheralded until 7 Medals of Honor were awarded by President Clinton in 1997, 6 of them posthumously, 52 years after World War II; and

Whereas, during World War II these soldiers bore the added burden of growing up in the Depression era, along with the degradation of fighting as segregated troops on foreign soil, while defending their nation's cause and their personal honor and integrity as men; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin legislature designate February 20, 1998, as "Buffalo Soldier Day" to commemorate the distinguished deeds performed by all African-American soldiers who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces with devotion and distinction, and in many instances given their lives in the service of their country, and hold them up for all generations to revere as great patriots of the highest order, worthy of emulation by all.

Senator Fred Risser
President of the Senate

Representative Scott R. Jensen
Speaker of the Assembly

Date

Charles R. Sanders
Assembly Chief Clerk