

Proclamation



Jane Castor, Mayor

WHEREAS, city of Tampa, Florida residents revere those who came before us and contributed to our very way of life, and although they have departed, they left many contributions and gave sacrifices so that we would enjoy a better quality of living, and have given us greater opportunities than they had during their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, Tampa, Florida has been blessed with a multitude of individuals from all walks of life who paved the way for us, and our community is blessed with a unique history and culture due to those who built our city and instilled their own special contributions to our history and way of life, and they have earned our admiration and appreciation; and

WHEREAS, cemeteries are sacred ground where our loved ones and respected community leaders lay in eternal rest, and they are hallowed places where people can go to reflect and honor the departed, and Tampa has many historical cemetery sites that have their own special significance including the **Martí-Colón Cemetery, St. Joseph Aid Cemetery/Montana City Cemetery, and Woodlawn Cemetery**; and

WHEREAS, originally two separate entities, the **Martí-Colón Cemetery** in West Tampa was originally the Martí Cemetery, dating from the 1890s and the final resting place for predominantly Cuban and other Latin residents of Tampa, and in 1936, the City of Tampa acquired the property so Columbus Drive could be extended to meet the needs of the growing community, and thereafter leased the cemetery property to A.P. Boza Funeral Home, who operated from 1928-1991, and with their purchase of additional land, created the Colón Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, the **St. Joseph Aid Cemetery**, also known as the Montana City Cemetery, was established by Reverend Thomas H. B. Walker, the minister of Bowman Methodist Episcopal Church from 1907 to 1920, to meet the interment needs of the Tampa African American community, and he transferred ownership in 1928 to the Stone Memorial Funeral Home where burials continued until 1940, when it was lost to unpaid taxes; and

WHEREAS, the **Woodlawn Cemetery**, the largest City of Tampa owned municipal cemetery, was established in 1888 in the Tampa Heights neighborhood, and since its founding, burials were not restricted based on race, religion, or ethnicity, and it is the resting place for many of Tampa's notable residents including former Mayor George Sparkman, Mayor Perry Wall, Mayor William Frecker, Mayor Francis Lyman Wing, United States Congressman Stephen M. Sparkman, and Clara Frye, who opened and operated one of the first hospitals for Tampa's African American residents; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of Tampa's rich historical cemeteries, the Hillsborough County Historical Advisory Council is hosting a **Historical Marker Unveiling Ceremony** in conjunction with the City of Tampa Archive Awareness Week and the Tampa Soulwalk project to honor the Martí-Colón, St. Joseph Aid and Woodlawn Cemeteries at Tampa City Center, 2555 E. Hanna Avenue, on Friday, July 18, 2025, and the special event will provide the opportunity to recognize the significance of the cemeteries and history, and honor all those who rest there with the placement of the historical markers.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida, do hereby proclaim Friday, July 18, 2025, as

“HISTORICAL CEMETERIES RECOGNITION DAY”

in the city of Tampa, Florida and urge all residents to join me in thanking those involved in ensuring those who paved the way for us may rest in peace, in paying tribute to those who have served our city, state, and nation, and never forget their contributions and efforts by honoring them at every opportunity.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 18th day of July 2025.



Jane Castor

Mayor