



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

DESIGNATION OF THE JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN RECONCILIATION PARK
AS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK SITE

By the Secretary of the Interior of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, distinguished historian, educator, and civil rights advocate Dr. John Hope Franklin irrevocably transformed our understanding of American history through his scholarship and activism, while advancing the cause of the African American civil rights movement during the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, a native of Oklahoma, John Hope Franklin was born in 1915 in the town of Rentiesville, one of Oklahoma's all-Black communities; and

WHEREAS, in 1921, Buck Colbert (B.C.) Franklin, a prominent lawyer and father of John Hope Franklin, moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, and bore witness to what became known as the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, one of the most devastating acts of racial violence recorded in U.S. history; and

WHEREAS, the massacre, which began on May 31, 1921, culminated in 2 consecutive days of widespread violence and devastation in Tulsa's Greenwood area, one of the wealthiest Black communities in the Nation at that time, leaving many residents dead or detained, and homes, churches, and businesses destroyed; and

WHEREAS, B.C. Franklin survived the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 and defended other survivors of the massacre, successfully suing the city before the Oklahoma Supreme Court, which overturned a Tulsa ordinance that restricted the city's Black community in its efforts to rebuild after the Tulsa Race Massacre; and

WHEREAS, B.C. Franklin's family, including his wife, Molly (Parker), son John Hope Franklin, and daughter Harriet, joined him in Tulsa in 1925 after the rebuilding was completed; and

WHEREAS, Dr. John Hope Franklin, inspired by the life and work of his father, B.C., served in many professional and educational organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Legal Defense Fund, providing historical and sociological context for the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, at the groundbreaking for the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park, Dr. Franklin made one of his last public appearances before his death in March 2009; and

WHEREAS, the park, which features Hope Plaza and the Tower of Reconciliation, memorializes the history of African Americans in Oklahoma, including the lives lost to racial violence, with the goal of transforming years of racial division into a hopeful future of reconciliation and cooperation for Tulsa and the Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the national importance of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 in the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma; and the other events that occurred during those 2 days; and the creation of the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park, which memorializes the massacre and tells the story of African Americans' role in building Oklahoma, thus shaping our understanding of the history of race relations, racial violence, and the reparative work of reconciliation in the United States, I, David L. Bernhardt, Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, do designate the John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park, bounded by North Detroit Avenue, North Elgin Avenue, U.S. Highway 412, and Reconciliation Way, as part of the African American Civil Rights Network under Public Law 115-104.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, in recognition of this historic site, I have hereunto set my hand this 29th day of June, the two hundred and forty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America.



Secretary of the Interior