



City of Columbia

A Proclamation

WHEREAS, Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) is a national month of appreciation of nearly four centuries of American Jewish experience recognized each year in the month of May by Presidential proclamation; provides an opportunity to learn about and appreciate Jewish heritage for Jewish Americans and Americans of all backgrounds; and serves as antidote to antisemitism and a celebration of our nation's diverse communities;

WHEREAS, Jewish people have called South Carolina home since the late seventeenth century; established in 1749 one of America's first Jewish congregations—Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim or "Holy Congregation House of God"; supported and fought for the independence of the thirteen colonies during the Revolutionary War; served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and the South Carolina National Guard; contributed greatly to the cultural, economic, political, civic, social, educational, and religious life of the state; and, as of 2022, number approximately 16,820 residents statewide;

WHEREAS, Jewish people have resided in the Columbia area since the mid-eighteenth century; were among the first to purchase land in the city upon its establishment as the capital of South Carolina in 1786; and have since grown their community to number approximately 3,000 city residents and three Jewish congregations—Etz Chayim or "Tree of Life," Beth Shalom or "House of Peace," and Chabad-Aleph House;

WHEREAS, Columbia's Jewish residents formed the Hebrew Burial Society in 1822 and soon thereafter established a Jewish cemetery on Gadsden Street; founded the Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1826 to provide for the less fortunate members of their community; established the Columbia Israelite Sunday School in 1843 for the religious education of their youth; established the city's first Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel or "Remnant of Israel," in 1846; made great sacrifices to assist their fellow citizens during and after the Burning of Columbia in February 1865; established the city's first B'nai Brith chapter in 1871 to promote positive intercultural relations and community welfare; organized the city's oldest remaining Jewish congregation, Etz Chayim or "Tree of Life," in 1896; organized the city's second oldest remaining congregation, Beth Shalom or "House of Peace," in 1907; made great sacrifices to assist Jewish refugees of World War I and World War II; have been actively involved in efforts to combat racial and religious discrimination; and contributed greatly to the cultural, economic, political, civic, social, educational, and religious life of Columbia;

WHEREAS, the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina and Historic Columbia celebrate the heritage of Jewish Americans and their contributions to Columbia, the State of South Carolina, the United States of America, and the world, these institutions recognize nearly four centuries of American Jewish experience by establishing Jewish American Heritage Month in 2023;

WHEREAS, The City of Columbia fosters freedom of religious and cultural expression and encourages its diverse residents to learn about and appreciate the ways of life of people of all backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, races, and faiths;

WHEREAS, The City of Columbia celebrates the heritage of its Jewish residents and their contributions to city, state, country, and world and will recognize events and festivities in the month of May;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Daniel Rickenmann, Mayor of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, along with my fellow members of Columbia City Council, do hereby proclaim May as "Jewish American Heritage Month" in the City of Columbia and urge my fellow citizens to recognize and participate in its observance.

"Jewish American Heritage Month Proclamation"

Daniel J. Rickenmann
Mayor

Howard E. Duvall, Jr.
At-Large, Council Member

Edward H. McDowell, Jr.
District II, Council Member

Will Brennan
District III, Council Member

Aditi Bussells
At-Large, Council Member

Tina Herbert
District I, Council Member

Peter Michael Brown
District IV, Council Member