

PROCLAMATION

Alexander G. Clark Week

WHEREAS, Alexander G. Clark (1826-1891) was an outstanding African American human rights leader who made Muscatine his hometown and principal residence from his 1842 arrival until his 1890 departure as United States ambassador to Monrovia, Liberia; and

WHEREAS, Alexander G. Clark led courageous efforts for equal rights under Iowa's laws and constitution, in 1848 defending the former slave Jim White, in 1853 starting a lifelong association with Frederick Douglass, in the 1850s and 1860s petitioning against discrimination, and striving ever after to uphold and fulfill the promise of the Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, despite physical disability, Alexander G. Clark was an organizer and recruiter for Iowa's only "colored" regiment during the Civil War, and was elected president of Iowa's "colored" veterans at war's end when they gathered to campaign for full citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Alexander G. Clark is remembered as the father who sued for his daughter's right to attend Muscatine High School, who was vindicated in a landmark ruling by the Iowa Supreme Court upholding the equal right to education by all Iowa students regardless of background; and

WHEREAS, Alexander G. Clark also achieved distinction regionally and nationally as a leader in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in the Prince Hall Masonic Order, in the Republican Party, as a lawyer, and as publisher of *The Conservator* newspaper; and

WHEREAS, the public memory of Alexander G. Clark and his achievements faded after his death until efforts by determined individuals generations later restored his name, and occasions honoring his legacy are growing more frequent since the first Alexander Clark Day in 1958; and

WHEREAS, little of a material nature now remains to bear witness to the life of Alexander G. Clark, with the notable exception of the handsome house he built on West Third Street in Muscatine; and

WHEREAS, the Alexander G. Clark House has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1976, and is now being proposed for recognition as a National Historic Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the Muscatine City Council in 2010 created the Alexander G. Clark Heritage District as an expression of our community's pride and a place for remembering our part in struggles for justice;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Richard W. O'Brien, Mayor of the City of Muscatine, do hereby proclaim the week of February 20-26, 2011, as Alexander G. Clark Week in the City of Muscatine, Iowa.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name to be affixed this 17th day of February, 2011.

Richard W. O'Brien, Mayor