

STATE of WISCONSIN



OFFICE of the GOVERNOR

Proclamation

WHEREAS; located at 400 N. Plankinton Ave., Milwaukee's Black Nite Bar was one of the city's most popular gay bars during the early 1960s and one of the only safe and celebratory spaces that existed for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals in Milwaukee at the time; and

WHEREAS; on the evening of August 5, 1961, several men attempted to enter the Black Nite with the intention of bullying, harassing, and assaulting its patrons but were forcibly removed by the bar's employees and patron, Josie Carter, a gender non-conforming person of color and leader in Milwaukee's burgeoning LGBTQ community; and

WHEREAS; upon their return to the Black Nite later that evening with threats of further violence, the attackers were met by courageous patrons who—inspired and mobilized by Carter to take a stand for themselves and their community—defended the bar, culminating in an intense brawl that made headlines across the city; and

WHEREAS; the Black Nite Brawl, as it has come to be called, was the first known LGBTQ uprising in Wisconsin history and one of the first in the history of the United States, having occurred eight years before the historic Stonewall Riots in New York City; and

WHEREAS; the Black Nite Brawl was monumental in mobilizing LGBTQ individuals to come together to demand liberation and equality and was instrumental in sparking a movement for LGBTQ rights in Milwaukee and fostering a more visible and vibrant gay culture, which persists to this day; and

WHEREAS; in 2022, the site of the Black Nite Uprising was officially designated as a historic landmark by the Milwaukee County Historical Society, making it the first LGBTQ landmark in Wisconsin devoted to the history of the LGBTQ community; and

WHEREAS; although progress has been made to advance LGBTQ rights in Wisconsin and across the United States in the more than 60 years since the Black Nite Brawl, much more work remains to ensure that members of the LGBTQ community—and transgender individuals and LGBTQ people of color, in particular—are treated equitably and with dignity under the law in Wisconsin and across the country; and

WHEREAS; today, the state of Wisconsin joins the city of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, all Milwaukeeans, and all Wisconsinites in recognizing the 65th anniversary of the Black Nite Brawl, denouncing homophobia and all forms of discrimination and hate, and celebrating LGBTQ individuals across the state as part of Wisconsin's collective history and heritage;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tony Evers, Governor of the State of Wisconsin,
do hereby proclaim August 5, 2026, as

BLACK NITE REMEMBRANCE DAY

throughout the State of Wisconsin, and I commend this observance
to all our state's residents.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my hand and caused the
Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin
to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in
the City of Madison this 21st day
of July 2026.

Tony Evers
TONY EVERS
GOVERNOR

By the Governor:

Sarah Godlewski
SARAH GODLEWSKI
Secretary of State