

# 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 folks identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) in Milwaukee at the time; and

*WHEREAS*; on the evening of August 5, 1961, four men attempted to enter the Black Nite with the intention of bullying, harassing, and assaulting its patrons on the basis of their gender identity and sexual orientation, but were forcibly removed by the bar's employees and patron, Josie Carter, a gender non-conforming woman 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 four 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*; like the Stonewall Riots, the Black Nite Brawl was a fierce defense of an LGBTQ space led by gender non-conforming people of color, during a time when very few of these spaces existed and when transgender existence itself was criminalized and outlawed; and

*WHEREAS*; the Black Nite Brawl was monumental in mobilizing LGBTQ individuals to come together, form a community, and 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*; although progress has been made to advance LGBTQ rights in Wisconsin and throughout the United States in the 60 years since the Black Nite Brawl, we recognize that much more remains to be done to ensure that our LGBTQ-identified family members, friends, and neighbors—and transgender individuals and LGBTQ people of color, in particular—are treated equitably and with dignity under the law in our state and across our country; and

*WHEREAS*; today, the state of Wisconsin joins the city of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, all Milwaukeeans, and all Wisconsinites in recognizing the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Black Nite Brawl, denouncing homophobia and all forms of discrimination and hate, and celebrating LGBTQ-identified individuals throughout our state as part of our collective history and heritage;

*NOW, THEREFORE*, I, Tony Evers, Governor of the State of Wisconsin,  
do hereby proclaim August 5, 2021, as

## BLACK NITE REMEMBRANCE DAY

throughout the State of Wisconsin and I commend this observance  
to 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 30<sup>th</sup> day of July 2021.

TONY EVERS  
GOVERNOR

By the Governor:

DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE  
Secretary of State