

RESOLUTION 26-

WHEREAS, the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, wish to recognize the profound impact, enduring resilience, and rich history of the Binford family, whose extraordinary contributions have helped shape the Huntsville we know today; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Henry Claxton Binford, retired Professor Emeritus of History in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern University after 50 years of distinguished service, and his wife, Janet Cyrwus, are in attendance at the March 26, 2026, meeting of the Huntsville City Council to accept this resolution on behalf of the renowned Binford family, whose legacy authored some of the proudest and most impactful chapters in our city's history; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Binford is the great-grandson of Henry C. Binford Sr., a pioneering educator who served as the first teacher and principal of Huntsville's first public school for Black children, and who founded *The Journal* newspaper in 1895, which operated on Huntsville's west side square until 1912; and

WHEREAS, in 1901, Henry C. Binford Sr. was elected to the Huntsville Board of Aldermen, becoming one of the last Black elected officials in Huntsville, along with Daniel Brandon, until the election of Dr. Richard Showers in 1988; and

WHEREAS, through moral courage and unshakable leadership following the ratification of Alabama's 1901 Constitution, Henry C. Binford Sr. uplifted and encouraged civic participation by urging Black citizens to pay poll taxes and exercise their right to vote, while also advocating for Huntsville's Black public schools; and

WHEREAS, when funding for Black public schools was reduced in 1905, Henry C. Binford Sr. led efforts to raise funds for teacher salaries and educational materials, successfully building support across racial lines and strengthening the foundation of public education in Huntsville; and

WHEREAS, his son, Henry Binford Jr., continued this legacy of service after graduating from Howard University, returning to Huntsville to teach alongside his father; however, following a reduction in funding for Black public schools in 1905, Mr. Binford left Huntsville to accept a teaching position in Maryland, but later returned home when the Board of Education and local citizens raised funds to supplement his salary the following year; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of Henry Binford Jr.'s service to the Huntsville community, the Huntsville Housing Authority named the first public housing project for Black Huntsvillians in honor of Mr. Binford Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Mary Wood Binford, grandmother of Dr. Binford, also carries a strong legacy in Huntsville, having made history in 1920 as one of six Black women in the city to register to vote, demonstrating remarkable courage and a commitment to breaking down systemic barriers and building a better Huntsville for all; and

WHEREAS, the Binford family's legacy reflects a deep and enduring commitment to education, civic responsibility, and perseverance, that has left a lasting impression on the hearts of Huntsville's citizens and beyond.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council and Mayor of the City of Huntsville hereby recognize the entire Binford family for their extraordinary contributions to the City of Huntsville and for their role in shaping the city we know today; and express their sincerest gratitude for the Binford family's enduring legacy of leadership and service, and extend a warm welcome to Dr. Binford and Mrs. Cyrwus upon the occasion of their visit to Huntsville.

ADOPTED this the ___ day of _____, 2026.

President of the City Council of
the City of Huntsville, Alabama

APPROVED this the ___ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor of the City of Huntsville,
Alabama