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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Salem State Professor and Medford Poet Laureate to Headline Melrose's Third Annual Juneteenth Flag-Raising Ceremony

MELROSE, MA – Salem State University Professor Jamie Wilson and Medford Poet Laureate Terry Carter are among the North Shore residents headlining the City of Melrose's 3rd Annual Juneteenth Flag-Raising Ceremony on Friday, June 16, at 6:30 p.m. at the Essex St. entrance to City Hall. The ceremony is made possible through a partnership between the Office of Melrose Mayor Paul Brodeur and the North Shore Juneteenth Association (NSJA) to celebrate Juneteenth—Emancipation Day—and increase public engagement and awareness of the significance of the holiday. The event is free and open to the public.

Wilson, of Malden, is a Professor of History at Salem State University where he teaches courses in United States and African American History. He is also the author of several books including the upcoming biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., titled *Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Life in American History*. He is an expert in 20th-century American history; African American history; African Diaspora history; the Black Panther Party of Connecticut; the Civil rights movement; and Health politics in Harlem, New York.

In addition to Professor Wilson's keynote remarks and a live poetry performance by Poet Laureate Carter, of Medford, the Juneteenth celebration will feature a reflection by Lynn resident and activist Reverend Andre Bennette; a performance of the Black National Anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing," by Tanya Crowell; and remarks by City Council President Jen Grigoraitis, Mayor Paul Brodeur and State Representative Kate Lipper-Garabedian.

Melrose resident Michael Phillips, age 12, will raise the City's Juneteenth Flag with his father, Joe Phillips, a member of the Melrose Human Rights Commission and Chair of Mayor Brodeur's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Task Force.

"We are truly honored to celebrate Juneteenth alongside our residents and elected officials, the North Shore Juneteenth Association, and the many talented and passionate North Shore residents who share our commitment to raising awareness of this American holiday," said Mayor Paul Brodeur. "Every year, we are fortunate to witness the raising of the Juneteenth flag as the Black National Anthem is sung. This year, we are particularly lucky and excited to have a young Melrose resident, Michael Phillips, raise the flag alongside his father. We look forward to building upon the traditions of the past and making progress into the future as we continue to engage with this crucial piece of our nation's history."

“North Shore Juneteenth Association is proud to continue raising awareness about the Juneteenth holiday by collaborating with the City of Melrose,” said Nicole McClain, Founder and President of the North Shore Juneteenth Association. “Collaborations like these allow our mission to reach as many residents as possible with the goal of opening hearts and minds to the Black American experience.

"In my first year as a State Representative, I was incredibly proud to vote to make Juneteenth an official state holiday," said Representative Kate Lipper-Garabedian. "And I'm also proud to represent a City that since then has spearheaded such a vibrant annual celebration. Juneteenth, a day that for so long lacked formal recognition, is more than a symbol; it creates a space for us to contemplate how our nation can live up to the values on which we were built. It is an opportunity to commit to further action in pursuit of a more free and just society."

Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day or Freedom Day, represents the end of slavery in the United States. Despite Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation taking effect on January 1, 1863, hundreds of thousands of Black people continued to be enslaved in the United States. It was not until Union soldiers delivered the news of the abolition of slavery in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865, that the last group of enslaved Black people in the United States were freed. The following year, on June 19, 1866, the first official Juneteenth celebrations took place in Texas.

The City of Melrose will close its municipal buildings in observance of Juneteenth on Monday, June 19. The Melrose Police and Fire Stations will remain open.

About Terry Carter

Terry Carter, of Medford, was named the inaugural "Poet Laureate" of the City of Medford, MA, in 2021. His two-year term ends in June 2023. Terry is a writer, husband, father, teacher, visual artist, and jazz aficionado. These experiences permeate his poems and "poetic stories." He takes contemporary life and faith experiences and translates them into word pictures that engage people in a truly unique way. His life influences are family, race, culture, and a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He has now published five volumes of poetry, *Brown Skin and the Bread of Life: A Poet's Journey* (2010-AmericaStar), *Brown Skin and the Beautiful Faith: A Poet's Reflection* (2014-Xulon Press), *Brown Skin and the Brand New Day: A Poet's Renaissance* (2016-Xulon Press), and *Brown Skin and the Burden of Proof: A Poet's Revelation* (2018-Xulon Press). Terry published his latest book, *Brown Skin and the Brave New World: A Poet's Anthem* in 2020. He graduated Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Fisk University with a bachelor's degree in English. Carter completed a graduate fellowship in Mass Communications at Boston University and is a seasoned corporate trainer and has worked for many years in the sales, HR, and career development fields. He currently directs Elder Services for a community center in Medford.

About Reverend Andre Bennette

Reverend Andre Bennette is a graduate of UMass Amherst, Endicott College, and Atlantic Coast Theological Seminary. In addition to serving as Reverend of Zion Baptist Church in Lynn, MA,

he also serves as a leader and guide to youth, and, as assisted by the church's Youth Ministry Team, oversees ministries related to youth and young adults. Bennette is passionate about resolving systemic racism and publicly acts on behalf of this cause. He participates in speaking engagements, records videos, and organizes and speaks at demonstrations. In June 2021, he led a rally against systemic racism that wound through several North Shore towns, ending in front of the Swampscott home of Governor Charlie Baker. He's also started expanding his work to include advocacy for the LGBTQ+, immigrant, and low-income communities.

About North Shore Juneteenth Association

North Shore Juneteenth Association Inc. is a group of community leaders seeking to create awareness about the Juneteenth holiday, educate the broader community about positive aspects of Black American culture, and dismantle racism by using events and programming as a tool for change. North Shore Juneteenth Association Inc. is a not-for-profit 501c (3) organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible. 100% of your donation goes directly toward program and operating costs.