



WAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PROCLAMATION

Recognizing May 2026 as Jewish American Heritage Month

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2006, following unanimous resolutions passed by both houses of Congress, President George W. Bush proclaimed the month of May as Jewish American Heritage Month, recognizing the more than 350-year history of Jewish contributions to the United States; and

WHEREAS, Jewish American Heritage Month is an annual opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural heritage, enduring resilience, and invaluable achievements of Jewish Americans who have helped shape American history, society, and values; and

WHEREAS, Wake County's Jewish story began in 1810, when Moses Mordecai became the first Jewish settler in the county, and deepened in 1862 when Bavarian immigrants Michael and Regina Grausman became Raleigh's first practicing Jewish residents, operating a tailoring business and, in 1874, transforming a nursery room of their home into the first synagogue in Raleigh — a gathering place for Torah study, prayer, and community; and

WHEREAS, from those humble beginnings, Wake County's Jewish community has grown and flourished across generations: in 1875, what would become Beth Meyer Synagogue was formally established, and in 1912, eight visionary leaders gathered above a downtown Raleigh grocery store to found Temple Beth Or — the county's first Reform Jewish congregation; today, there are four additional synagogues in Wake County: The Shul Downtown, Chabad of Cary, Congregation Sha'arei Israel/Chabad, and Beth Shalom; and

WHEREAS, in a powerful symbol of continued growth and renewal, Wake County this year welcomed the consecration of a new downtown Raleigh synagogue — the first downtown Jewish congregation in many decades — reflecting the vitality and expanding reach of Jewish life in the heart of our community; and

WHEREAS, today, Wake County is home to a thriving and diverse Jewish community, including the Jewish Federation of Greater Raleigh, synagogues representing Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and other expressions of Jewish life, Hillel at North Carolina State University, and numerous community organizations serving a growing Jewish population that has helped shape the character and civic life of our county for more than two centuries; and

WHEREAS, Wake County's Jewish residents have contributed to the county's civic, cultural, educational, and economic life across every generation — from early merchants and business owners who helped build Raleigh, to educators, physicians, attorneys, artists, and community leaders who continue to strengthen our shared community today; and

WHEREAS, Jewish Americans have made lasting contributions to all areas of American life — including science, medicine, business, law, arts, education, sports, government, military service, and civil rights — enriching the cultural fabric of our nation and our local community; and

WHEREAS, while Jewish Americans have found opportunity and freedom in the United States, they have also faced antisemitism and discrimination throughout history, which continues

today; Wake County stands firmly against hate in all its forms and reaffirms its commitment to fostering a community rooted in inclusion, safety, and mutual respect; and

WHEREAS, Jewish American Heritage Month honors the many generations of Jewish Americans whose perseverance, achievements, and values have helped define the American story;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wake County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim the month of May 2026 as **Jewish American Heritage Month** in Wake County, North Carolina, and encourages all residents to learn more about and celebrate the vital contributions of Jewish Americans in our community and across the nation.

Adopted May 4th 2026.

Donald Mial, Chair
Wake County Board of Commissioners