



# Proclamation

Board of County Commissioners  
Manatee County, Florida

- WHEREAS**, Gwendolyn “Gwen” Brown was a lifelong Palmetto resident whose father was a state social worker and whose mother worked as a private maid and nursing assistant at Manatee Memorial Hospital; and
- WHEREAS**, Gwen Brown was a member of the last graduating class from Palmetto’s Lincoln Memorial High School in 1969, and then attended Manatee Junior College (now known as the State College of Florida) until 1972 when she graduated with an Associates of Arts degree and then achieved her Bachelor of Science from Florida Atlantic University in 1974 and her Master’s Degree in Supervision and Early Childhood Education from Nova Southeastern University; and
- WHEREAS**, Gwen’s extensive education in early childhood learning led her to a career as the Social Services Director and teacher of Early Childhood Education and Management at Manatee County Head Start and as a teacher at the Early Childhood; and
- WHEREAS**, Gwen later served as the Executive Director of Manatee County Head Start from 1991 until 2002 and became involved heavily in public service by running for the Board of County Commissioners; and
- WHEREAS**, in 1994 Gwen Brown became the first African American to be elected to the Board of County Commissioners and later became the Board’s first African American Chairman in 2008; and
- WHEREAS**, during her time on the County Commission Gwen advocated for job creation, helping to develop a “Jobs Now” program to respond to the recession of 2008 and she helped usher in a more customer-friendly County Government and she helped bring about important infrastructure improvements to her home District 2, helping to establish Lincoln Park and helping to secure millions of dollars in street improvements, and the expansion of 17<sup>th</sup> Street East in Palmetto; and
- WHEREAS**, as a County Commissioner Gwen lobbied Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal for a \$21.5 million-dollar grant that allowed the Bradenton Housing Authority to establish Bradenton Village at the former site of the Rogers Garden Park Apartments and she helping secure \$250,000 to build a new 13th Avenue Community Center for low-income youths; and
- WHEREAS**, throughout her time in public office Gwen maintained her commitment to children by educating the teachers of the future as she became a professor of Parental Involvement, Multicultural and Emerging Literacy at Nova Southeastern University from 2003 until 2005 and she served as adjunct professor of Early Childhood Education and Management at the State College of Florida Sarasota-Manatee in 2008; and
- WHEREAS**, despite the constant demands of being a County Commissioner and a collegiate instructor, Gwen continued to improve herself through education, achieving her Doctor of Education degree from Nova Southeastern University in 2007; and
- WHEREAS**, after her career as a County Commissioner ended in 2010, Dr. Brown continued to serve her community with a special fondness for causes that would benefit children and help them become more educated.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Manatee County, Florida, that October 13, 2020, shall be known, designated, and set aside as

## THE HONORABLE MANATEE COUNTY COMMISSIONER GWEN BROWN DAY

in Manatee County, Florida.

**ADOPTED** with a quorum present and voting this 13<sup>th</sup> day of October 2020.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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Betsy Benac, Chairman

ATTEST: Angelina Colonnese  
Clerk of the Circuit Court

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