

School District of BELOIT

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March 2022 - Black History Month

Celebrating Family, Legends, and Black Excellence

Black History is that short month that I celebrate Family, Legends, and Black Excellence in my community and throughout the country. It is a way to honor the culture and contributions of the past and take a glimpse into the struggle of my ancestors and their hard work and dedication that has given me certain rights and privileges. I personally thrive on learning about history and enjoy reading non-fiction.

I enjoy honoring my culture, not just the African American experience but the African American experience in Beloit, and learning about how the first African Americans in Wisconsin settled in Beloit, with dreams of making a better life working for corporations up north. My late paternal grandfather, **Pastor C.F. Hereford**, was one of those adventurous souls who relocated his family from Mississippi for this American Dream.

Honoring Those Who Have Made A Difference

I enjoy honoring those individuals who have made a difference in my community and are proud graduates of the School District of Beloit. Women like **Mrs. Barb Hickman**, who paved the way for me in education, and **Ms. Wanda Sloan**, who continues to work for the betterment of our community. Also, for people who have branched out and have outstanding accomplishments, such as **State Representative Sheila Stubbs** and **Retired Major General Marcia Anderson**, who are proud Merrill Elementary School graduates. I would also like to mention my brother, **Lamar Hereford**, who is Beloit Proud and works for a Fortune 500 company as a Corporate Business Manager, and my sister, **Ashley Hereford**. She gives back to the community through her service at McNeel Intermediate as a Library Media Specialist.

Reflecting on my Journey and Supporters

Black History Month is also a time to reflect on all the great people who supported and pushed me along the way in my journey. **Dr. Candace Link**, an educator at Beloit Memorial High School, was determined to make sure that I understood African American contributions to our society through her guidance at church and the Help Yourself Program at Beloit College. **Mr. Booker Street**, my elementary school principal, and one of the past principals at Merrill Elementary. He still makes it a point during

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his retirement to support me and check on me. The late **Mr. Hugo Henry**, a former educator at McNeel Intermediate, who instilled in me that giving back to the community that gave to me is essential. **Dr. Brenda Atlas**, former principal at Merrill Elementary, motivated me through her journey and the INROADS program at Beloit College. **Ms. Carmen Flucker**, a former Aldrich Intermediate School teacher, would give me the shirt off her back and push me further than I have ever been pushed professionally and personally since the moment that I decided to become an educator.

A Source of Strength and Renewal

Black History Month is a source of strength and renewal to me. As principal of Merrill Elementary, I get to inspire my students to keep learning and growing and have hope despite the adversity they may face in their lives.

During this time, I recognize that I am not alone, that people in the past struggled and made it through to a better future. As I grow weary, I am reminded that all things are accomplished through hard work and dedication as I continue to push myself towards greatness.

Black History Month is a time to be grateful for my parents, **Frank and Viola Hereford**, who were always that positive beam of light for me growing up and through adulthood. I remember all of my ancestors for the traditions and culture bestowed upon me as a child. My maternal grandmother, **Dimple Lofton**, taught me how to cook sweet potato pie, biscuits, peach cobbler and gave me my family history.

Renewal of My Soul and Faith

What does Black History Month mean to me? It means a renewal of my soul and my faith in this community. I came in from some of the best; I was raised and supported by the best. Beloit Black History Icons helped mold who I am today.