



# FROM THE DESK OF BRUCE SIMPSON, CITY OF DETROIT OMBUDSMAN

*"Improving Your Quality of Life on a Daily Basis"*



## *Juneteenth Holds a Significant Place in My Heart*

Hello Detroit!

I am your City of Detroit Ombudsman, Bruce Simpson, and I take great pride in being the grandson of the late Barbara-Rose Collins, a respected political figure. She was the first Black Congresswoman from Michigan. In 1996, she made history during her congressional term, as she was the first to petition the U.S. Government to make Juneteenth a federal holiday.

My grandmother understood the significance of Juneteenth as a day of activism and historical importance. She worked tirelessly towards getting the bill passed so that it could become a national holiday. She shared with me that she learned a tough lesson when she displayed her eagerness to see it pass. Barbara-Rose Collins found out that several representatives were unaware of the concept and meaning of Juneteenth. She mentioned, after explaining, that the bill speaks to the importance of preserving the lines of communication between the powerful and the powerless in our society and that it also allows us to look back on our past with increased awareness and heightened respect for the strength of the African American men women and children who endured unspeakable cruelties and bondage. Her colleagues gained a better understanding of its significance and understood how important it was to her to see this bill pass. However, several representatives were not supportive because they had no affiliation. Of course, times have changed, and I am grateful for the new perspectives of our U.S. House and Senate members.

I want to thank our Detroit City Council President, Mary Sheffield, for proposing the Juneteenth Ordinance in 2022, and the Detroit City Council for unanimously approving it on May 9, 2023. This ordinance recognizes June 19th as a paid holiday for Detroit City employees. I'd also like to thank U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) for her legislative contributions in getting the bill passed and to President Biden, as he signed into law on June 17th, 2021, declaring Juneteenth as a Federal holiday.

Juneteenth's recognition of progress is inspiring, especially after 25 years of my grandmother's congressional work. Her legacy inspires me and countless others.

Bruce Simpson, Ombudsman  
City of Detroit



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**Monday through Friday (open to the public) 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.**

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