

# The City of Cambridge, Maryland



## Proclamation

### **A PROCLAMATION HONORING CAMBRIDGE'S CIVIL RIGHTS LEGACY, RECOGNIZING GLORIA RICHARDSON AND THE CAMBRIDGE MOVEMENT, AND AFFIRMING THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO EQUAL ACCESS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, AND HUMAN DIGNITY**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Cambridge ("Cambridge") holds a nationally significant place in the Civil Rights Movement, where local leadership and community organizing pressed government to move from custom and exclusion to enforceable commitments and public accountability; and

**WHEREAS**, Cambridge's civil rights history is inseparable from its Black history—families, faith communities, workers, students, and organizers who insisted that dignity, opportunity, and safety are not privileges, but rights; and

**WHEREAS**, Black History Month provides an appropriate moment to honor the people and places that shaped the struggle for civil rights, to preserve the truth of local history, and to recommit to the work of building a community where opportunity is not determined by race, background, or circumstance; and

**WHEREAS**, Cambridge's history is one of many threads woven into the fabric of MD250 and US250 history, reminding us that the American story is made real in local communities and measured by how fully its promises reach all people; and

**WHEREAS**, Gloria Richardson, a principal leader of the Cambridge Movement, demanded more than symbolism by calling for the end of segregation and discrimination in public life, equal access to public accommodations, fair employment opportunity, and housing conditions that reflected equal respect for all residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the period of unrest and confrontation in Cambridge in the early 1960s led to urgent negotiations and a documented set of commitments commonly known as the "Treaty of Cambridge"; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Justice played a direct role in convening negotiations, including the participation and attention of U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, underscoring a core expectation: local government must stand with all of its residents and ensure equal protection and equal access to the benefits of public life; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 1, 1963, the Commissioners of Cambridge adopted Charter Amendment No. 15, adding Section 127A "Discrimination in Public Accommodations," declaring it unlawful for an owner or operator of a place of public accommodation, or an agent or employee, to refuse,

withhold from, or deny any person accommodations, advantages, facilities, or privileges because of race, creed, color, or national origin; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Charter Amendment was petitioned to referendum and did not pass at a special election held on October 1, 1963; and

**WHEREAS**, though the proposed Charter Amendment did not pass, it nonetheless reflected an early local effort to put civil rights principles into written law, because equal access is not real unless it is enforceable; and

**WHEREAS**, Cambridge's history teaches that democracy is not only celebrated—it is tested—and communities prove their values when they choose fairness in policy, practice, and public life;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, the Mayor of Cambridge, Maryland, do hereby proclaim that:**

**1. The City of Cambridge honors the Cambridge Movement and recognizes the residents whose courage demanded equal access and equal opportunity—not as a request, but as a right.**

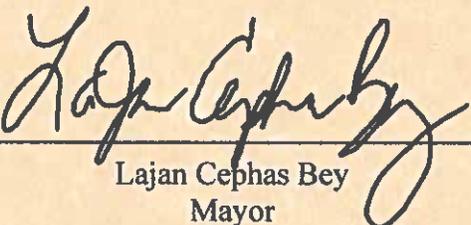
**2. The City of Cambridge recognizes and honors Gloria Richardson for pressing Cambridge to confront segregation and discrimination and for demanding enforceable change in public accommodations, employment opportunity, and housing conditions.**

**3. The City of Cambridge acknowledges the "Treaty of Cambridge" and recognizes the role of the United States Department of Justice, including U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, in elevating Cambridge's responsibility to protect the rights and dignity of all residents.**

**4. The City of Cambridge reaffirms its commitment to equal treatment, equal opportunity, and equal access in public life for all residents and visitors.**

Given Under My Hand and the Seal of the City of Cambridge, Maryland  
This 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, Two Thousand Twenty-Six



  
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Lajan Cephas Bey  
Mayor