



STATE OF TENNESSEE

# PROCLAMATION

BY THE GOVERNOR

**WHEREAS**, among the most consequential and significant events of the civil rights movement in our country is the integration of schools in 1955-56 in Anderson County, Tennessee; and

**WHEREAS**, 85 African-American students from the historic Scarboro community demonstrated extraordinary courage as they integrated Oak Ridge High School and Robertsville Junior High in September 1955; and

**WHEREAS**, one year later, 12 students matched this bravery as they integrated Clinton High School; and

**WHEREAS**, these students names shall be forever remembered for leading the way towards equal educational opportunity for all; and

**WHEREAS**, of the Clinton 12, six are living witnesses to this historic moment, including Anna Theresser Caswell, Regina Smith Turner, Gail Ann Upton Epps, JoAnn Crozier Allen Boyce, Bobby Cain, Minnie Ann Jones Dickey; along with six for whom this proclamation honors their legacy: Maurice Soles, Alfred Williams, William R. Latham, Ronald Gordon "Poochie" Hayden, Robert Thacker, and Alvah Jay Lambert McSwain

**WHEREAS**, these students and their supporters faced threats and acts of violence, including the late Reverend Paul Turner, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Clinton, who walked alongside the Clinton 12 in their journey to the classroom; and

**WHEREAS**, L.C. Gipson, Emma McCaskill, Ernestine Avery, Margaret Guinn, Gene Hawkins, Ethel Sykes, Alma Stevens, Dorothy Kirk Lewis, Eloise Mitchell, Alma McKinney Stevens, Mattie L. Scales, Margaret Strickland, Edward Threat represent the noble actions of the Oak Ridge 85; and

**WHEREAS**, the members of these historic classes will receive honorary diplomas from Anderson County Schools in recognition of their efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, the students who comprised the Clinton 12 and Oak Ridge 85 are Tennessee heroes whose story deserves to be remembered and celebrated;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim August 31, 2021 as

*Clinton 12 and Oak Ridge 85 Day*

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this thirtieth day of August, 2021.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Lee".

Governor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Morgan".

Secretary of State

