

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



ILENE SHAPIRO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Summit County celebrates Black History Month

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council passed legislation declaring February 2024 to be Black History Month in Summit County. Residents are encouraged to explore local history and events throughout the month.

“Black History Month is our opportunity to dive deeper into the people, places, and stories woven into the fabric of our community,” said Executive Shapiro, “It is worthwhile for us to remember and celebrate local history and recognize that there is progress to be had, and that history continues to be made in our community!”

Clerk of Courts Tavia Galonski made history earlier this year with her appointment as the first Black woman to hold a Charter Office position in Summit County. Last year, Council President Veronica Sims broke ground as the first Black woman to hold the title.

Summit County features several landmarks with significance in Black history, including the John Brown House and the soon-to-be unveiled Sojourner Truth Legacy Plaza. The John Brown House on 514 Diagonal Road was home to abolitionist John Brown. Brown was born in Connecticut and moved to Hudson with his family in 1805 before renting the house from Col. Simon Perkins from 1844 to 1854. In 1859, Brown attempted to spark a rebellion of enslaved people by raiding an armory in Harpers Ferry in what is now West Virginia. He was captured by U.S. soldiers and later executed.

Sojourner Truth was an abolitionist and women’s rights activist who gave a renowned speech at the Women’s Rights Convention of 1851, where she boldly declared “I am a woman’s rights” in the speech transcribed by Marius Robinson. Born Isabella Bomfree in New York in 1797, Truth was enslaved since birth and faced harsh conditions and violence. She escaped slavery in 1827 and moved to New York City where she became a charismatic preacher. Her prowess won national recognition and she soon joined the abolitionist and women’s rights movements. She fought for the simultaneous suffrage of Black people and women.

This Black History Month, residents will find various events, speakers, and stories to learn about local and national history. Residents also have the opportunity to visit the Akron Art Museum’s exhibition, “RETOLD,” which features art from the Wesley and Missy Cochran Collection and focuses on four themes: remembering, religion, racialization, and resistance. Many of the pieces, such as “American Domestic” by Willie Cole, fuse or critique popular American culture and art using African American history, symbols, and experience. To learn more, visit [RETOLD: African American Art and Folklore](#).

A list of local Black History Month events is available at <https://signalakron.org/akron-black-history-month-events-2024/>.

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