

**Proclamation 7686 of June 13, 2003****Father's Day, 2003**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

Fatherhood is one of life's most challenging yet fulfilling endeavors. On Father's Day, we honor America's fathers and express our appreciation for all they do to help build a strong foundation for our children and our Nation. We also reaffirm our commitment to supporting fathers and encouraging responsible fatherhood in our society.

Fathers have indispensable roles to play in the lives of their children: provider, protector, nurturer, teacher, and friend. Every caring father unconditionally loves his sons and daughters and strives for the best for his children in the future. In seeking to give their children the opportunity to succeed, fathers offer needed strength, guidance, and discipline.

Fathers teach their children many basic things in life: how to read a book, throw a ball, tie a necktie, ride a bike, or drive a car. More importantly, they also help instill time-honored values in their children, such as hard work, respect, honesty, and good citizenship. Through their words, actions, and sacrifices, fathers play an important role in shaping the characters of their sons and daughters.

The time and attention that a father gives to a child is irreplaceable—there is no substitute for the involvement and commitment of a responsible father. Not only are fathers essential to the healthy development of children, they also influence the strength of families and the stability of communities.

For this reason, our Government is working to help fathers succeed in this challenging, but life-affirming, role. Over the last 2 years, my Administration has taken important steps to promote responsible fatherhood and encourage community-based initiatives that help them fulfill their important roles. We are working to provide funds for healthy marriage and parenting education and for community mentoring programs to help fathers become more engaged and involved in their children's lives.

This Father's Day, we recognize the many fathers who are heroes and role models for their children, and we encourage more men to fulfill this responsibility by loving their sons and daughters with all their heart and demonstrating this love daily. By working together to encourage America's fathers, we can strengthen our society and help ensure the well-being of all our children.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, in accordance with a joint resolution of the Congress approved April 24, 1972, as amended (36 U.S.C. 109), do hereby proclaim June 15, 2003, as Father's Day. I encourage all Americans to express love, admiration, and thanks to their fathers for their contributions to our lives and to society. I direct the appropriate officials of the Government to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on this day. I also call upon State and local governments and citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

**Proclamation 7687 of June 24, 2003**

**Black Music Month, 2003**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

For centuries, black artists have created or inspired distinctively American musical styles. During Black Music Month, we celebrate the ways that African-American music has helped shape American society and reflect the character of our Nation, and we recognize the pioneers who spearheaded these important musical forms.

Throughout history, African-American music has shown the social climate of the time. From the days of slavery and discrimination, through the progress of the Civil Rights movement, to today, black music has told the story of the African-American experience. In addition to giving voice to black struggles, faith, and joys, African-American music has helped also to bring people together. Before our Nation's strides toward equal justice, music such as jazz and blues provided a venue in which people of all races could be judged by their talent, and not the color of their skin.

The people who sang the earliest African-American music knew the worst of human cruelty and earthly injustice. In spirituals, work songs, and shouts, we hear the pain of separation and the bitterness of oppression. We also hear courage, and the comfort and strength of a faith that trusts God to right every wrong and wipe away every tear. These songs were used to share stories, spread ideas, preserve history, and establish community.

Early work songs and spirituals laid the creative foundation for the development of gospel, blues, and jazz. In black churches throughout the south, gospel offered a medium to share the good news. The beauty of both gospel and the blues lies in their power to express emotions that can be felt as well as heard. The blues were first popularized in America by W.C. Handy. A classically trained musician, this "Father of the Blues" helped to compose and distribute blues music throughout the country. His music continues to touch people today.

In the early 20th century, the progression to jazz took place all over the country, from the deep south of New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta to northern cities such as Chicago and New York. Black artists migrated to Harlem, New York in large numbers, creating a culturally diverse hub for black art, writing, and music known as the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem became a place of energy and magic, and timeless music emerged from this period. The heart of the Harlem Renaissance is reflected in the original and authentic music of such influential figures as Bessie Smith, Count Basie, and Fletcher Henderson.