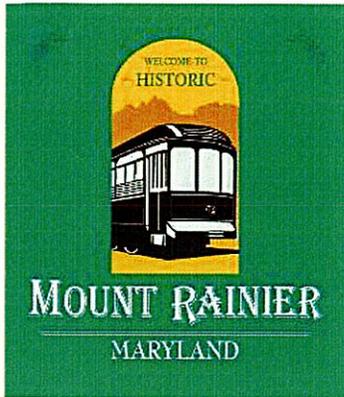


First Reading: September 2, 2025

Second Reading and Adoption: October 7, 2025



## CITY OF MOUNT RAINIER, MARYLAND

### RESOLUTION No. 08-2025

Introduced by: Mayor Celina Benitez

### **Proclaiming November 14 as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day in the City of Mount Rainier**

**WHEREAS**, on November 14, 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges walked to the formerly all-white William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana and integrated into the first elementary school in the South; and

**WHEREAS**, United States Marshals had to escort young Ruby Bridges and her mother to school every day, where a crowd of people who did not want her at the school yelled at her; and

**WHEREAS**, as soon as Ruby Bridges entered the school, white parents pulled their own children out, and all the teachers except one refused to teach while an African American child was enrolled in the school; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Barbara Henry was the only teacher that would teach Ruby Bridges and for the entire year Ms. Henry taught Ruby Bridges alone in the classroom; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the threats and protests, the Bridges family was determined to keep sending Ruby to school and she did not miss a single day of class that year; and

**WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges' act of bravery inspired America and paved the way for other African American children across the country; and

**WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges went on to graduate from a desegregated high school, marry and raise a family, and have a successful career; and

**WHEREAS**, Ruby Bridges also wrote two books about her experiences as a child, and she received the Carter G. Woodson Book Award for her work; and

**WHEREAS**, *Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County* (1946) is a historic court case on racial segregation in the California public school system. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that it was unconstitutional and unlawful to forcibly segregate Mexican American students by focusing on Mexican ancestry, skin color, and the Spanish language. This case forged a foundation upholding the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, thereby strengthening the landmark

Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which found racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional; and

**WHEREAS**, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed amicus (friend of the court) briefs. Writing for the NAACP was Thurgood Marshall who, five years later, used similar reasoning before the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The Supreme Court adopted many of Marshall's arguments and, in 1954, issued an opinion declaring that separating children in public schools on the basis of race was unconstitutional. The opinion was written by Chief Justice Earl Warren; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1954, Ruby Bridges was born, and the United States Supreme Court issued the landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* ordering the desegregation of schools; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1999, Ruby Bridges established the Ruby Bridges Foundation to promote tolerance and create change through education. The Ruby Bridges Foundation supports schools across the country in their celebrations of Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day on November 14 each year, with more than 650,000 participants in 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, in Prince George's County and other Maryland communities, the struggle to successfully integrate public schools continued into the 1970s and beyond; and

**WHEREAS**, the story of Ruby Bridges is an important continuation of Maryland native Thurgood Marshall's legacy and his work on *Brown v. Board of Education* to make a quality, equal education available to everyone; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Mount Rainier is committed to continuing our work to become a more inclusive city in which all the community – past, present, and future – are treated equally with dignity and respect; and

**WHEREAS**, both Mount Rainier Elementary School and Thomas S. Stone Elementary School – the City of Mount Rainier's two neighborhood public schools - are proud participants in Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day and longtime champions of walkability and equality;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Mount Rainier that November 14 is hereby proclaimed as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, in the City of Mount Rainier, to be recognized annually on this date; and in those years when November 14 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day will be celebrated on the following Wednesday. The City Council encourages all residents to participate in this celebration and to honor the rich history and cultural significance of Ruby Bridges' story.

**THIS RESOLUTION IS ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOUNT RAINIER THIS 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2025.**

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Sam, City Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Celina R. Benitez, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Danielle Carter, Councilmember Ward 1

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Hoffpaur, Councilmember Ward 1

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Valerie Woodall, Councilmember Ward 2

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Jakuta, Councilmember Ward 2

