



home > city hall > press releases

## Perris Black History Month Celebration Features Mile March

Perris elected representatives put on their walking shoes to take part in a march for "family, peace and unity" that kicked off the City's annual celebration of Black History Month.

Mayor Daryl Busch joined with Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers and councilmembers Tonya Burke, David Starr Rabb and Mark Yarbrough and ministers, educators, parents and teen-agers for the mile-march from Mercado Park to City Hall.

About 100 people participated in the Feb. 20 walk, which signified the start of a daylong festival that featured, praying, singing and talks about the history and impact of African-Americans on the U.S. over centuries.

Busch praised the diversity of the marchers, which included members of the group Cops and Clergy, Perris school principals, Police Chief Brandon Ford and his wife, Michelle, and pastors from Perris congregations. Organizers said the walk showed Perris as an example where various ethnicities and races work together to building a thriving community.

"It's great to see all sorts of people coming together to take part in this walk for unity," Busch told the assembled crowd moments before it took off from Mercado Park. "It's important to bring the community together. It makes Perris a better place."



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, Mayor Pro Tem Rita Rogers and City Councilwoman Tonya Burke listen to remarks before the start of the walk for peace and unity that kicked off the City's annual celebration of Black History Month.

Rogers organized the City's chapter of Cops and Clergy in 2002.

The group meets monthly to discuss issues of concern to the community and its police department and over the years members have forged a mutual and deep respect for each other, helping alleviate potential tensions between Perris residents and police.

Rogers, recovering from recent surgery, told the crowd that she was "so grateful, so blessed and so glad to be here" to participate in the unity walk.

"It's what every community, Every citizen of this country needs," she said.

Burke pointed out that the City Council includes three African-Americans and exemplifies the diversity within Perris. Her parents, Corine and Herbert Brown, marched with Martin Luther King in Selma in 1965 and the family remains committed to expanding civil rights and liberties.

"It's very important for us to embrace all the divergent cultures in our City," Burke said. "This celebration shows how important it is for our community to learn about each other. It is important to embrace our diversity."

Rabb called the march "is a beautiful thing that will help Perris become one of the best cities in the Inland Empire." It's great to set aside February to remember African-American history and contributions, he said, but those achievements should be celebrated throughout the year.

"The contributions of black people should be remembered every day," he said.

Yarbrough said Perris reflects the American melting pot, where many cultures work toward common goals and objectives.

"Perris is a microcosm of the U.S.," he said. "We're home to people of many nationalities and walks of life—from blue collar to PhDs. That's one of the reasons this City is so progressive."

The walk ended at Foss Field Park, where a crowd of several hundreds gathered to listen to music, remarks from dignitaries and peruse the offerings of food and merchandise vendors. There were historical displays in the City Council Chambers, speakers and student displays.



City Engineer Habib Motlagh flashes the peace symbol as he and Mayor Daryl Busch participate in the walk for peace and unity from Mercado Park to City Hall.

Margaret Briggs, president of the Perris Valley African American History Committee, told the crowd that remembering the struggles and success of past generations is vital to today's decision-makers and tomorrows.

"If we don't know where we've been we don't where we're going," Briggs said. "Many of us are in positions of authority and leadership because of our ancestors who paved the way. We have to be proud of our heritage."

Briggs presented the mayor and City Council with certificates of appreciation for their strong and continuing support of Black History Month activities.

"The City of Perris has been extremely supportive of our events and we appreciate it," she said.

Inside the council chambers, Craig Givins, Floyd Bullock and Curtis Gardner led a discussion about the accomplishments of black scientists and academics, including those who worked on the atom bomb that helped the U.S. win World War II. Such accomplishments, and those of other black business leaders, inventors and entrepreneurs must be taught and learned by current and future generations of young African-Americans to provide inspiration and encouragement.

Givins, an educator in Riverside, said Perris is leading the way among cities in promoting Black History Month by hosting such a wide-ranging and comprehensive celebration.

"I love the support the City of Perris gives to the promotion of educating people," he said.



Rosie Bass, vice-president of the Perris Valley African American History Committee, presents a commemorative coin marking the Feb. 20 celebration to City Councilman David Starr Rabb.

### Media Contact

Joe Vargo  
Public Information Officer  
951-943-6100  
[jvargo@cityofperris.org](mailto:jvargo@cityofperris.org)



Perris City Hall  
101 N. D Street  
Perris, CA 92570

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8 am - 6pm

Phone: (951) 943-6100  
[Main to City Hall](#) • [Contact us](#)

Get our mobile apps:  
[Apple](#) • [Android](#)

### Contact Perris

Call: (951) 943-6100 (available 24 hours/day)

[Report a Problem/Ask a Question:](#)

[Contact Form](#)

Follow us: [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [@](#)

### In this website

- ▶ [City Hall](#)
- ▶ [Government](#)
- ▶ [Residents](#)
- ▶ [Business](#)
- ▶ [Visitors](#)

Translate this site:

[Select Language](#) ▼