



June 17, 2021

Dear UMB Community,

Juneteenth is a day for all Americans to celebrate Black Americans' freedom and resilience, and to recommit ourselves to our nation's ideals of equality and opportunity for all. I'm pleased that it is now recognized as a regular holiday across the University System of Maryland, as a commemorative day in Maryland, and that the U.S. Senate recently approved a bill to make it a legal public holiday.

Juneteenth originally commemorated the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas on June 19, 1865 — more than two years *after* the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. It is now recognized as the preeminent national celebration of freedom from slavery in the United States. We should all take the opportunity to reflect and learn more about American history by celebrating Black history and culture on Juneteenth.

I hope that you take time to learn more about Juneteenth — or that you participated in some of the events at the [University of Maryland, Baltimore](#) this week. The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture is hosting a [Virtual Juneteenth Event: Reconstruction and African American Memory](#) on June 19 from 10 a.m. to noon, or you can learn more about the holiday from the resources below.

- [The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth](#) (National Museum of African American History & Culture)
- [Juneteenth: Our Other Independence Day](#) (*Smithsonian Magazine*)

We still have a long way to go in achieving equity in this country, but on Juneteenth, we celebrate freedom. Please spend some time reflecting on this historic event and its significance as you enjoy the day off tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS
President

This note was authorized for distribution to the University of Maryland, Baltimore community by the Office of the President.

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