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Dear Friends,

As we reflect on this momentous year, I am honored to recognize a milestone of extraordinary significance. One hundred years ago, in 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week—a dedicated time to honor the achievements, resilience, and contributions of Black Americans. The week was intentionally chosen to align with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln on February 12 and Frederick Douglass on February 14.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford expanded this observance and proclaimed February as Black History Month. Today, in 2026, we proudly mark the centennial of this important tradition—a full century of recognizing, uplifting, and learning from Black history in America.

This year also marks a meaningful achievement within our own community: the first annual Albuquerque Public Schools Visual and Performing Arts Black History Art Contest. This initiative honors the richness of Black history while empowering students to engage creatively, reflect deeply, and express their voices through art. Programs like this help young people connect history with creativity and ensure these stories continue to inspire future generations.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Albuquerque Public Schools for launching this inspiring contest. I also proudly recognize the twelve student winners whose exceptional works demonstrate the remarkable talent, imagination, and dedication of APS students. Your creativity enriches our community and helps keep the stories of Black Americans alive with passion and purpose.

I also want to offer sincere thanks to Ms. Donna and her team for their leadership and commitment in organizing this event. Your vision has created an opportunity that will positively impact students for years to come.

As we celebrate 100 years of Black History observance, let us continue to learn, reflect, and uplift the stories that shape our shared American experience.

With gratitude and admiration,

Senator Harold Pope Jr.