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RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN'S ACTION IN 1831 TO OPPOSE A COLLEGE FOR BLACK MEN, APOLOGIZING FOR THE HARM DONE, AND CALLING FOR REPARATIVE MEASURES AND RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVES.

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WHEREAS: Knowledge is power, and higher education is a proven and essential means for personal improvement, community development, and intergenerational wealth creation; and

WHEREAS: throughout much of the history of the United States, the doors to educational opportunity have been closed to Black people and other demographic groups on the basis of race, gender, religion, and socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS: Black Americans were not allowed to enroll at most colleges or universities, including Yale University, much before the Civil War; and

WHEREAS: in 1831, a group of courageous and committed abolitionists, including New Haveners John Creed, J. L. Cross, Simeon Jocelyn, Alexander C. Luca, Augustus Scipio, and Bias Stanley, came together to support a bold idea—to establish the nation's first college for Black men—an idea formally endorsed by the first annual Convention of the Free People of Color meeting in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS: committees were formed to raise \$10,000 from Black donors and \$10,000 from white allies, with the college to be governed by a board of four Black trustees and three white trustees; and

WHEREAS: these visionaries chose New Haven as the site of their proposed college, believing it to be “healthy and beautiful” with “friendly, pious, generous, and humane” people, among other advantages; and

WHEREAS: the site for the college would have been on Water Street between East and Wallace Streets, land that now sits below the juncture of Interstates 91 and 95; and

WHEREAS: Dennis Kimberly, the Mayor, called the city's “freemen,” i.e., white male property owners eligible to vote, to an extraordinary town meeting on the proposed college, where town leaders, including distinguished Yale alumni of Yale and others in positions of power and prestige, spoke against the college and so against the full citizenship and humanity of Black people; and

WHEREAS: on September 10, 1831, the Aldermen, Common Council, and Freemen of the City of New Haven passed a set of resolutions opposing the college, calling it proposed college “an unwarrantable and dangerous interference” in the affairs of states with slavery and a threat to Yale and other existing educational academies in New Haven, and affirming that they would “resist the establishment of the proposed College in this place by every lawful means;” and

WHEREAS: these resolutions were drafted by a committee appointed by Mayor Kimberly that included significant New Haven leaders, including Simeon Baldwin, a former congressman, judge, and mayor; William Bristol, a judge and former state senator, state representative, and mayor; David Daggett, a judge, founder of the Yale Law School and former U.S. Senator, state representative, and mayor; Samuel Hitchcock, another founder of the law school and later mayor; Ralph Isaacs Ingersoll, the congressman and former state representative and mayor; all of whom were also Yale alumni; and

WHEREAS: the white male property holders of New Haven voted 700 to 4 to oppose this experiment in Black higher education, thereby thwarting the dream of the nation's first HBCU and postponing the establishment of a college open to young Black people by decades; and

WHEREAS: in the wake of New Haven's action in 1831 and the opposition of Canterbury, Connecticut residents to the education of young Black women at an academy in their town in 1832, the State of

Connecticut passed legislation in 1833 that for some time legally prohibited Black people from out of state from being educated in Connecticut; and

WHEREAS: Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett of Derby graduated in 1853 from the Connecticut Normal School (now Central Connecticut State University), and Cortlandt Van Rensselaer Creed and Richard Henry Greene of New Haven graduated in 1857 from Yale, being the first people of African descent known to have graduated from colleges in Connecticut; and

WHEREAS: the prohibition of Black people accessing higher education in New Haven and Connecticut from colonial founding days well into the 19th century, along with limits on access that persisted for generations, has had detrimental and far-reaching consequences down to the present day; and

WHEREAS: it is essential to acknowledge the full history of our community, the tragedies as well as the triumphs, to understand the present, and to work for a better future.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the New Haven Board of Alders apologizes for the great harm that was done to Black Americans when City leaders and New Haven voters came together to oppose the college of 1831; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of New Haven recommits itself to fostering educational opportunities for all its citizens as one means of remediation of the harm done by the action of New Haven leaders and voters in 1831; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of New Haven will explore ways to memorialize this history so that others may learn not only about the effort to block the college but also about the brave visionaries who dreamed, planned, and worked for abolition, equality, and a truly democratic nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of New Haven encourages the New Haven Public Schools to include this history in teaching local history; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of New Haven recognizes the work that Yale University, with the Yale and Slavery Research Project, has done to research this history and to acknowledge the role its leaders and alumni played in blocking the proposed college for Black men in 1831; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of New Haven commends the effort to illuminate this important story by the Beinecke Library and its partners through the documentary film *What Could Have Been* and the exhibition *Shining Light on Truth: New Haven, Yale, and Slavery* at the New Haven Museum, and encourage city residents to learn more about this history through the film and exhibition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of New Haven commends the establishment of the Pennington Fellowships at New Haven Promise by Yale University to support New Haven public high school graduates who attend historically Black colleges and universities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of New Haven encourages Yale University to consider further reparative action and ongoing educational programs to address the legacy of the harm done in 1831.