



## ***Proclamation Celebrating the Life and Accomplishments of Marshal "Major" Taylor [1878 – 1932]***

***WHEREAS,** Major Taylor was the first African American athlete in the United States to be a member of an integrated professional sports team, and was the first African American athlete to compete in regularly integrated championships; and*

***WHEREAS,** Marshal "Major" Taylor became a world champion competitive cyclist in 1899 and 1900, and was the second African American ever to become a world champion; and*

***WHEREAS,** Major Taylor was the first African American to establish recognized world records in any sport, as well as he was the first to have a commercial sponsor; and*

***WHEREAS,** he successfully toured Europe, entering competitions and prestigious races, winning the hearts, acclaim and respect of its citizens and most influential people; and*

***WHEREAS,** the life and accomplishments of Marshal "Major" Taylor are demonstrations of what is possible when one is determined to overcome the odds; and*

***WHEREAS,** Major Taylor's motivation and hard won victories provide an inspiration to all, but in particular to our youth looking for successful role models; and*

***WHEREAS,** most significantly Major Taylor accomplished the above and more in a blatantly hostile, cruel, racist American society that openly discriminated against African American people; and*

***WHEREAS,** in spite of adverse conditions and challenges, Major Taylor rode to great heights with incalculable passion, discipline, and emotional intensity; and*

***WHEREAS,** these efforts matured from and were supported by a foundation of spirituality, fierce family loyalty, as well as strong community advocates who recognized the exceptional qualities in Major Taylor, and helped nurture them; and*

***WHEREAS,** The Major Taylor Association created by Lynne Toleman has highlighted his achievements and elevated his extraordinary contributions and status, as one of the pre-eminent African American sports pioneers in the world; and*

***WHEREAS,** all of the above was eloquently captured in two poignant biographies - Andrew Ritchie's, Major Taylor The Fastest Bicycle Rider In The World, and Todd Balf's Major published in 2000; and*

***WHEREAS,** on May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 2011, several regional programs that promote the health and well being of youth and family, are sponsoring two days of healthy events and activities inspired by the legacy of Major Taylor; and*

***WHEREAS,** we are pleased to have two of these events here in the City of Richmond, where bicycling and many other forms of movement are promoted as part of a larger vision of a healthier Richmond.*

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** that I, Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, on behalf of the Richmond City Council, recognize the contributions and the accomplishments achieved by Marshal "Major" Taylor.*

***AND BE IT, FURTHER RESOLVED:** that I, encourage all residents to participate in any of the community events, especially the Richmond events: On May 13<sup>th</sup> at the Nevin Community Center, there is a free public event in the form of a slide show and book signing by author Andrew Ritchie. The following day, May 14<sup>th</sup> there will be a Bike Rodeo promoting bike safety, health and wellness at Lincoln Elementary School.*

---

Gayle McLaughlin, Mayor  
City of Richmond  
April 26, 2011

---

Jovanka Beckels, Council Member  
City of Richmond  
April 26, 2011