

# PROCLAMATION

## A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE LATE IMAM BENJAMIN SHABAZZ FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND TO THE CAUSE OF RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**WHEREAS**, Imam Benjamin Shabazz, known to many simply as “Brother Benjamin,” was a pillar in the community and was beloved by many, an African American man who dedicated his life to racial and economic justice and human rights for all; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin was born on September 21, 1946 and grew up in Camden, New Jersey; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin served in the military, and was sent to Vietnam where he earned three purple hearts before being honorably discharged; and

**WHEREAS**, after returning from the war Brother Benjamin settled in Seattle, married and had four children; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin became a leader in the Muslim community, serving as Imam to the community for more than 30 years and focusing his life work on struggling for freedom, justice, and equality for all; and

**WHEREAS**, as an integral part of the Islamic School of Seattle (ISS) for the majority of the school’s 32-year existence in the Central District, Brother Benjamin was an imam, a beloved teacher of social justice, and a respected elder to many generations of Islamic School of Seattle students; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin was a key leader in restructuring the ISS into the progressive Cherry Street Mosque, which continues to this day in the Central District; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin was an unwavering Muslim ally to Jewish and Christian communities, organizing numerous interfaith programs and dialogues establishing a bridge for understanding and working together; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin was a staunch advocate for economic and social justice, as an early and outspoken advocate of the \$15 minimum wage, and a strong supporter and activist for rent control and renters rights, taxing large for-profit corporations to fund affordable housing and address gentrification, for the rights of the African American community, and for the rights of all immigrants and working people; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin was a recipient of many awards, including the Muslim Man of the Year award at the national Muslim Journal awards; and

**WHEREAS**, as a long-time member of the Brighton Apartments community in Rainier Valley, a non-profit owned building serving elders and immigrant families, Brother Benjamin selflessly worked with the other tenants to organize and advocate for their rights, helping to secure a rent freeze agreement in the building to prevent the displacement of low-income residents; and

**WHEREAS**, Brother Benjamin continued this advocacy work, not stopping even as his health declined, most recently serving on the Brighton COVID committee which ensured the safety and health of the elders and immigrant families; and

**WHEREAS**, Imam Benjamin Shabazz died peacefully on Thursday, March 4, 2021, with his family reporting that the last things he heard were a reciting from the Quran and the call to morning prayer; and

**WHEREAS**, the Seattle City Council joins with Seattle’s Muslim community, the Brighton Apartments residents and foundation board members, and the broader community in mourning the loss of Imam Benjamin Shabazz; and

**WHEREAS**, the Seattle City Council recognizes Imam Benjamin Shabazz’ work will live on, through the inspiration and devotion to justice and righteousness that he instilled in so many people over the decades of his life; and

**WHEREAS**, we are committed, as a community, to join with others in carrying on this important work of economic and racial justice for all, including fair pay, housing rights, respect for one another, religious freedom, and rights and dignity for all; and

**WHEREAS**, we make this commitment with the endurance and urgency required to make progress for the people of Seattle, especially working people, elders, the African American community, and other marginalized communities to whom Imam Benjamin Shabazz dedicated his life energy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Seattle City Council is proud to make this commitment in honor and memory of Imam Benjamin Shabazz.

*NOW, THEREFORE, THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL PROCLAIMS*  
Monday, March 8, 2021, TO BE

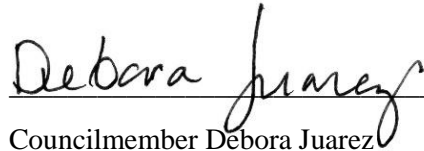
## **Imam Benjamin Shabazz Day**



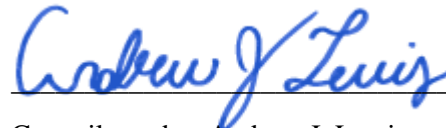
Council President M. Lorena González



Councilmember Lisa Herbold



Councilmember Debora Juarez



Councilmember Andrew J. Lewis



Councilmember Tammy J. Morales



Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda




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Councilmember Alex Pedersen



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Councilmember Kshama Sawant



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Councilmember Dan Strauss