



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A PROCLAMATION

GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS: The Gullah and Geechee culture on the beautiful Sea Islands of Georgia has retained ethnic traditions from West Africa since the 18th century. Modern scholars recognize the region stretching from Sandy Island, South Carolina, to Amelia Island, Florida, as the Gullah Coast; and

WHEREAS: Many traditions of the Gullah and Geechee culture were passed from one generation to the next through oral tradition, agriculture, and spirituality. Enslaved rice growers from West Africa brought with them knowledge of how to fashion tools needed for rice harvesting, like the intricately made fanner baskets for winnowing rice; and

WHEREAS: The spiritual practice of ring shout singing has also been passed down to subsequent generations. Fast-paced, rhythmic clapping accompanies singing while participants dance counterclockwise in a circle as they offer praise. Aspects of this festive custom are thought to be related to the communal dances found in many West African traditions; and

WHEREAS: Following the placement of Gullah Geechee culture sites on the list of most endangered historical culture sites in America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the U.S. Congress enacted the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Act in 2006 to help preserve this important part of our history; and

WHEREAS: The Gullah Geechee heritage is rich in history and culture. It is important to preserve the endangered traditions of this noble subsection of Georgia's population by passing down its vibrant and festive customs to each new generation as well as promoting awareness of the Gullah Geechee heritage; now

THEREFORE: I, NATHAN DEAL, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim October 2015 as GULLAH GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE MONTH in Georgia.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 25th day of September in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen.



Nathan Deal

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

Chris W. Riley

CHIEF OF STAFF