

# Proclamation

*Whereas,* Fire Chief Vencelin Harris, Jr. has been serving the Town of Chapel Hill and Chapel Hill Fire Department with integrity and distinction since February 23, 1994 when he completed the Triangle Region Fire Challenge Academy and earned his firefighter certifications; and

*Whereas,* during his career with the Fire Department he moved through the ranks to serve in the Operations Division positions of Firefighter, Fire Equipment Operator, Captain, Battalion Chief, and

*Whereas,* he was known as a leader who purposely sought out and mentored those personnel who showed an interest in their professional development, and

*Whereas,* this leadership attribute led to his 2011 appointment to serve as the department's Battalion Chief of Training, and

*Whereas,* in this capacity he continued to work with Durham Technical Community College, various mutual aid partners and others to promote effective fire and emergency services training in Chapel Hill and Orange County; and

*Whereas,* from there, he assumed the position of Emergency Management Coordinator for the town, a position in which he demonstrated collaboration and effective teambuilding to help the Town navigate numerous major events, including protests, storms, and celebrations; and

*Whereas,* in February 2020 those same skills and gifts led to his selection to serve as Fire Chief from whence he successfully led the Chapel Hill Fire Department through the COVID-19 pandemic and the many challenges of a new phase of organizational planning and preparation for the future, and

*Whereas,* other CHFD accomplishments under his leadership have included:

- Promotion of Camp Ignite, a program dedicated to recruiting women into fire service careers
- Initiation and support of 2020 CHFD/Durham Technical Community College joint fire academy
- A champion of recruitment, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the fire service throughout his career

*Whereas,* in 2023, Vence was awarded the Black History Achievement Award by the Servpro Corporation in recognition of his leadership, character and commitment to service.

NOW, THEREFORE, in appreciation of his more than 29 years of leadership and caring for our community, we, the Chapel Hill Town Council, do hereby proclaim Friday, June 16th, 2023 to be

## Vencelin Harris, Jr. Day

in Chapel Hill and urge everyone to show their appreciation to Vence for all he has done for our community.



GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL ON THIS THE NINTH DAY OF JUNE IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE.

*Ram Harris*