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5 **A RESOLUTION**
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7 Commemorating the life of Henry “Hank” Aaron, one of the greatest baseball players of
8 all time, and declaring February 4, Hank Aaron Day in Milwaukee County
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11 WHEREAS, according to David L. Porter’s *Biographical Dictionary of American*
12 *Sports: Baseball*, Henry Louis “Hank” Aaron was born on February 4, 1934 in Mobile,
13 Alabama, son of a rivet bucker in a shipyard, taught himself baseball, and according to
14 the January 22, 2021 Eau Claire *Leader-Telegram* article, “Hank Aaron’s legacy
15 included playing in Eau Claire,” Aaron, while signed with the Boston Braves, played one
16 season for the Class C Minor League Eau Claire Bears in 1952 where he was
17 recognized as the Northern League Rookie of the Year, made the All-Star Team, and hit
18 a .336 batting average while playing shortstop; and
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20 WHEREAS, in 1954, Aaron began his major league career as outfielder in
21 Milwaukee when he played for the Milwaukee Braves in the National League, where he
22 would go on to help win the 1957 World Series in Milwaukee against the New York
23 Yankees and also played in the 1958 World Series, batting an average of .364 in those
24 series, and was chosen as Major League Most Valuable Player in 1957; and
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26 WHEREAS, Aaron surpassed Babe Ruth’s career record 714 homeruns on April
27 8, 1974 at Fulton County Stadium in Atlanta and had a career total of 755 homeruns
28 and according to Porter, throughout Aaron’s baseball career he played in the All-Star
29 Game 24 times, had 15 seasons where he hit 30 homeruns and scored 100 runs, and
30 led the National League player statistics in:
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- 32 • Homeruns in 1957, 1963, 1966, and 1967
- 33 • Runs batted in (RBI) in 1957, 1960, 1963, and 1966
- 34 • Slugging percentage (SLG) in 1957, 1959, 1962, 1971
- 35 • Hits in 1956 and 1959
- 36 • Batting average in 1956 (.328) and 1959 (.355)
- 37 • Runs scored in 1957, 1963, and 1967

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41 WHEREAS, Aaron played 21 seasons for the Braves in Milwaukee and Atlanta
42 but played his last two seasons where he began his career, in the Cream City for the
43 then-American League Milwaukee Brewers, playing the last game of his 23-season
44 career on October 3, 1976 in Milwaukee County Stadium; and

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46 WHEREAS, in 1982 Aaron was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame
47 and later had his No. 44 jersey retired in Atlanta and Milwaukee, later serving in
48 administrative roles for the Atlanta Braves and TBS broadcasting network; and

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50 WHEREAS, in a February 5, 1994 *New York Times* story, “Sports of The Times;
51 The Hammer Is a Year Older,” Aaron reflected how he and other Black Americans
52 “changed the face of baseball,” but also expressed the painful racism he endured while
53 chasing Babe Ruth’s record: “April 8th, 1974, really led up to turning me off on baseball,”
54 Aaron said. ‘It really made me see for the first time a clear picture of what this country is
55 about. My kids had to live like they were in prison because of kidnap threats, and I had
56 to live like a pig in a slaughter camp. I had to duck. I had to go out the back door of the
57 ball parks. I had to have a police escort with me all the time. I was getting threatening
58 letters every single day. All of these things have put a bad taste in my mouth and it
59 won’t go away. They carved a piece of my heart away.”; and

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61 WHEREAS, Aaron nonetheless maintained his dignity in the face of adversity,
62 according to Major League Baseball’s mlb.com January 22, 2021 article, “Facing racism
63 Aaron still had hope, optimism,” Aaron “kept the letters – hundreds of thousands of
64 letters – that he received when chasing Babe Ruth’s home run record and beyond. They
65 were vile letters, angry letters, threatening letters. Letters that revealed, in no uncertain
66 terms, the dirty underbelly of a nation that has left its most fundamental issues of race
67 and equality unresolved. . .,” while still remaining positive, “That’s one of the wonderful
68 things about being in his company and talking with him about the most difficult issues
69 involving race and opportunity and inequality. There was always a sense of hopefulness
70 and calm and focus about him, which I found incredibly comforting,” stated President
71 and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund; and

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73 WHEREAS, in the January 22, 2021 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article,
74 “Baseball legend Hank Aaron, who began and ended his big-league career in
75 Milwaukee, dies at 86,” after Aaron passed away on that day, the newspaper quoted
76 Milwaukee Brewers team owner Mark Attanasio who said, “He is a cherished part of our
77 organization’s legacy and cherished in Wisconsin. He was a great person of enormous
78 class and grace. He was a role model for all of us. They don’t make them like that
79 anymore. He was so, so special. He may be the best baseball player who ever lived and
80 one of the best human beings who ever lived. As big a fan I was of him as a player, I’m
81 an even bigger fan as a human being.”; and

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WHEREAS, in light of Hank Aaron’s illustrious professional baseball career, mirror to the face of America, and character as an outstanding role model; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Economic and Community Development, at its special meeting of February 24, 2021, recommended adoption of File No. 21-237 (vote 5-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, Milwaukee County in memoriam, celebrates the life and accomplishments of Henry “Hammerin’ Hank” Aaron and hereby declares February 4 as Hank Aaron Day in Milwaukee County.

02/24/21
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