IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth
day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the
Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and
twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7687 of June 24, 2003

Black Music Month, 2003

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

For centuries, black artists have created or inspired distinctively Amer-
ican musical styles. During Black Music Month, we celebrate the ways
that African-American music has helped shape American society and
reflect the character of our Nation, and we recognize the pioneers who
spearheaded these important musical forms.

Throughout history, African-American music has shown the social cli-
mate of the time. From the days of slavery and discrimination, through
the progress of the Civil Rights movement, to today, black music has
told the story of the African-American experience. In addition to giving
voice to black struggles, faith, and joys, African-American music has
helped also to bring people together. Before our Nation’s strides toward
equal justice, music such as jazz and blues provided a venue in which
people of all races could be judged by their talent, and not the color
of their skin.

The people who sang the earliest African-American music knew the
worst of human cruelty and earthly injustice. In spirituals, work songs,
and shouts, we hear the pain of separation and the bitterness of op-
pression. We also hear courage, and the comfort and strength of a faith
that trusts God to right every wrong and wipe away every tear. These
songs were used to share stories, spread ideas, preserve history, and es-
tablish community.

Early work songs and spirituals laid the creative foundation for the de-
velopment of gospel, blues, and jazz. In black churches throughout the
south, gospel offered a medium to share the good news. The beauty of
both gospel and the blues lies in their power to express emotions that
can be felt as well as heard. The blues were first popularized in Amer-
ica by W.C. Handy. A classically trained musician, this “Father of the
Blues” helped to compose and distribute blues music throughout the
country. His music continues to touch people today.

In the early 20th century, the progression to jazz took place all over
the country, from the deep south of New Orleans and the Mississippi
Delta to northern cities such as Chicago and New York. Black artists
migrated to Harlem, New York in large numbers, creating a culturally
diverse hub for black art, writing, and music known as the Harlem
Renaissance. Harlem became a place of energy and magic, and timeless
music emerged from this period. The heart of the Harlem Renaissance
is reflected in the original and authentic music of such influential fig-
ures as Bessie Smith, Count Basie, and Fletcher Henderson.
African Americans continued to influence popular music through the 1940s and 50s, with the emergence of rhythm and blues and rock and roll. These revolutionary styles built upon various forms of African-American music, fusing elements of jazz, blues, and gospel.

African-American music continues to influence the American music scene today with styles such as rap and hip-hop. As we celebrate the many creative and inspiring African-American artists whose efforts have enhanced our Nation, we recognize their enduring legacy and look to a future of continued musical achievement.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2003 as Black Music Month. I encourage Americans of all backgrounds to learn more about the heritage of black musicians, and to celebrate the remarkable role they have played in our history and culture.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 7688 of June 30, 2003

Death of James Strom Thurmond

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

As a mark of respect for the memory of James Strom Thurmond, the longest serving member and former President pro tempore of the United States Senate, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, that on the day of his interment, the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at the White House and upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset on such day. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same period at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH