

Alachua County Florida

A Proclamation

**Declaring December 30th, 2024, as
“Josiah Thomas Walls Day”
in Alachua County, Florida**

- Whereas,** *Josiah Thomas Walls was born into slavery on December 30, 1842, near Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia; and*
- Whereas,** *during the American Civil War, Josiah served in both the Confederate and Union Armies, ultimately rising from private to first sergeant in the Union Army; and*
- Whereas,** *during the Reconstruction era, Josiah became a trailblazer in politics, serving as Florida's first Black Congressman after being elected to the Florida House of Representatives, twice to the Florida State Senate, and three times to the United States House of Representatives; and*
- Whereas,** *Josiah was a property owner in Alachua County. He owned eighty acres outside Newnansville, one-half block in downtown Gainesville, and a 1,150-acre plantation between Gainesville, Micanopy and Archer, acquired from a confederate general; and*
- Whereas,** *he was a successful farmer and lawyer, served as Mayor of Gainesville, held a seat on the Alachua County Commission, and was the owner, editor, and publisher of the Gainesville newspaper, New Era. He also worked as a schoolteacher in Archer and was a founding figure of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee; and*
- Whereas,** *Josiah received numerous accolades throughout his life, reflecting his remarkable contributions to his community and the nation.*

Now, therefore, through the authority vested in me by the Board of County Commissioners of Alachua County, Florida, I do hereby proclaim December 30th, 2024, as “Josiah Thomas Walls Day” in Alachua County, Florida.

Duly proclaimed this 10th day of December, A.D., 2024.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ALACHUA COUNTY FLORIDA

By: _____
Charles S. Chestnut IV., Chair

ATTEST:

J.K. “Jess” Irby, Esq.