

PROCLAMATION
of the
SEMINOLE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PROCLAIMING ALTON WILLIAMS AS
2025 ARTIST OF THE YEAR

WHEREAS, the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners and the Seminole Cultural Arts Council (SCAC) acknowledge the significant role that the arts play in the quality of life of the residents of Seminole County and support the Artist of the Year program; and

WHEREAS, the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners wishes to acknowledge the contributions of individual Cultural Artists (performers, visual artists, historians, and authors) as Artist of the Year, who have contributed to the enrichment of Seminole County, and who are active in the community for the advancement of the arts; and

WHEREAS, the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners will honor local artist Alton Williams, a philanthropist, author, historian and storyteller; and

WHEREAS, Alton Williams, born at Winter Park Memorial Hospital, attended the historic Rosenwald Elementary School in Altamonte Springs and graduated from Lyman High School. He later studied Business Administration at what is now Seminole State College. He has built a legacy of community leadership as the founder of Odds & Ends Cleaning Services, Inc. in Longwood. He has led efforts to restore Evergreen Cemetery in Casselberry, transforming a neglected site from his childhood into a place of beauty and remembrance

WHEREAS, Alton Williams has worked for more than three decades to help document and preserve the history and culture of African American communities in Seminole County. The focus of these endeavors has been his well-known work at Evergreen Cemetery, located at 150 S. Cypress Way in Casselberry, Florida. The sixteen acres of land was donated by William and Laura Brawne. It became the burial place for former enslaved men and women in 1890. The cemetery was dedicated in 1903 and may have as many as one thousand burials today. Over the years, the cemetery has also been known as the Altamonte Colored Cemetery, the Fern Park Cemetery, and the Altamonte and Fern Park Community Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Alton Williams, who has served as chairman of the Evergreen Cemetery Trust since 1998, has worked to ensure that those who had been laid to rest in the historic hallowed grounds would forever be afforded the dignity and recognition they deserved. Alton rallied a dedicated team of volunteers to help him convert an abandoned and overgrown cemetery from a dumping ground and lovers' lane into a beautiful sanctuary and serene setting for visitors.

WHEREAS Alton has gathered oral and written history, public and private documentation and many photographs to support his first book, *Sand Pines – History in a Shoe Box*, published in 2021 to much acclaim. The Brawner House Museum of Historical Facts and nearby research library are located on the grounds of the cemetery in a replica of one of the nine shotgun style houses that once were the homes of the very people now buried. The houses served as homes to African Americans who worked in nearby ferneries in Casselberry and Altamonte Springs. Alton is writing his second book about the history of Altamonte Springs, to be published in the near future.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners wishes to commend Alton Williams for his promotion of the arts and culture throughout Seminole County and Central Florida.

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that this Proclamation be spread upon the Official Minutes by the Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for the County of Seminole and presented to Alton Williams with best wishes on his selection as 2025 Artist of the Year.

ADOPTED, this 28th day of October 2025.

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Jay Zembower, Chairman