

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA

Presented to

Friends of the Christmas Parade

WHEREAS, the Ocala Christmas Parade was founded in 1955 by the Downtown Business Alliance under the leadership of the late Stanley Malaver, and has since become a cherished tradition that has evolved over the years into one of Florida's largest and most beloved nighttime holiday events; and

WHEREAS, the Ocala Chamber of Commerce organized the parade for many years under the late Parade Queen, Ms. Phyllis Hamm, and in 1999, Friends of the Christmas Parade, LLC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was established to carry on the tradition; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Ocala Christmas Parade was awarded 3rd place in a large-scale event competition for the Southeastern Conference of the United States, showcasing the parade's dedication to excellence and community involvement; and

WHEREAS, the Ocala Christmas Parade has earned the title of the largest nighttime Christmas parade in the State of Florida, has featured celebrity participants like the Budweiser Clydesdales, Oscar Mayer Wienermobile, Miss Budweiser boat, and Mickey and Minnie Mouse, creating an unforgettable holiday experience; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, at the request of Belleview Mayor Christine Dobkowski, the Friends of the Christmas Parade took over organizing the Belleview Christmas Parade, preserving this cherished tradition as a festive and safe event for Marion County;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida, that:

1. Friends of the Christmas Parade is hereby recognized for their dedication to maintaining the family-friendly, free Christmas traditions of Ocala and Belleview, and their hard work in organizing these beloved events each year.

2. This proclamation shall be furnished to **Friends of the Christmas Parade** and shall be made a part of the Public Records of Marion County, Florida, in the minutes of the meeting of the Board of County Commissioners in and for Marion County, Florida.

DULY RECOGNIZED this 21st day of **January, 2025**.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA**

KATHY BRYANT, CHAIRMAN

CARL ZALAK, III, VICE CHAIR

MICHELLE STONE, COMMISSIONER

CRAIG CURRY, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

GREGORY C. HARRELL, CLERK

MATT MCCLAIN, COMMISSIONER