



# *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS,** from 1961 to 1975, more than 40,000 Hmong individuals were recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to fight alongside American soldiers in the Secret War, a vital part of the Vietnam War, in Laos; and

**WHEREAS,** on May 14, 1975 marked the fall of Long Cheng 49 years ago that forced thousands of Hmong to flee Laos to seek refuge from persecution; and

**WHEREAS,** many Hmong war refugees and their families immigrated to other countries, including the United States, and to California - where today Merced is home to more than 8,000 Hmong residents; and

**WHEREAS,** we honor the legacy of the Hmong people who served, were wounded, or lost their lives in battle to ensure America remains the land of the free, knowing we forever owe a debt of gratitude for their sacrifice; and

**WHEREAS,** the City of Merced recognizes the important cultural, social, political, and economic contributions of Hmong Americans that provide generational enrichment and enhancement to this county across many sectors, including CBOs, business, healthcare, education, public safety, and government; and

**WHEREAS,** on May 14, 2024, the City of Merced is one of three cities in the State of California to commemorate this day and to formally recognize and celebrate the history, culture and contributions of Hmong Americans in Merced City and other cities in California;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, MATTHEW SERRATTO, Mayor** do hereby proclaim May 14, 2024, as the Hmong American Day in Merced City and invite you to join us in commemorating this day and formally recognizing and celebrating the rich history, culture, and contributions of Hmong Americans in Merced City and other cities throughout California.

Signed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of May 2024

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*Matthew Serratto, Mayor of Merced*