



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, February 20, 2025

Media Contact:
Matt Smith, Communication Director, matt.smith@houstontx.gov

Houston City Controller Chris Hollins Honors Community Dignitaries During Black History Month Ceremony

HOUSTON – On Thursday morning, City Controller Chris Hollins hosted a Black History Month ceremony in City Hall to recognize the contributions of several members of Houston’s Black community who have made the Bayou City a more vibrant and prosperous place to live.

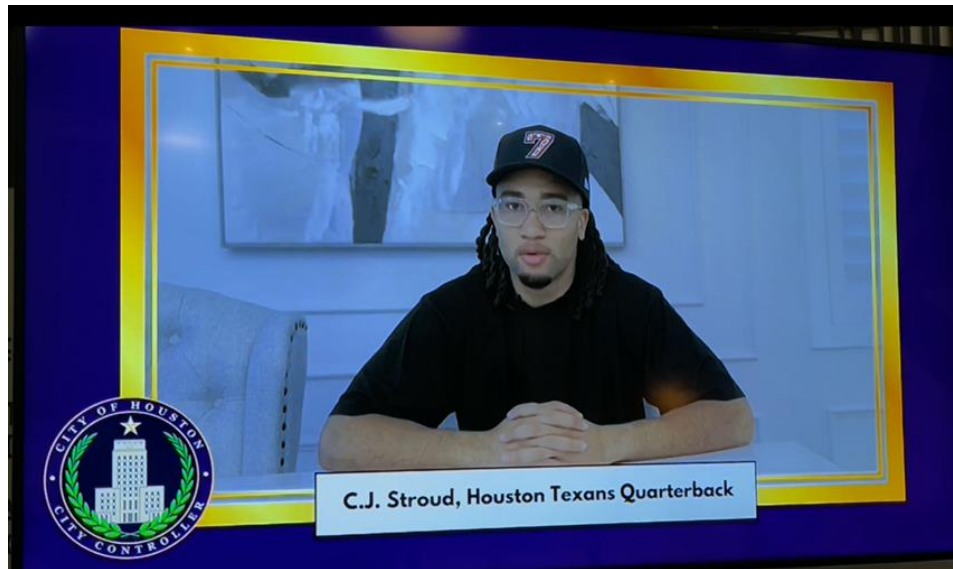
Legacy Awards were designated for the families of deceased Houstonians who made lifelong contributions to the betterment of our community, while Community Awards were presented to those who are actively working to make Houston a better place to live.

Hollins observed, “Black History Month is a period of reflection, where we first acknowledge our ancestors who built this country while enduring unimaginable brutality – and through it all kept the faith. We also recognize the trailblazers who fought for freedom, equality, justice, and prosperity for all.”

Legacy Awards were presented to family members of Judge Zinetta Burney, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, and Reverend William A. “Bill” Lawson.

Hollins noted that Black History Month was also a time to reflect on the present by “celebrating influential voices and community champions who continue to lift us up.” Awards in this category were presented to Former U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige (Community Trailblazer Award), Pastor Tiffany Tarrant of St. John’s Downtown Church (Community Hero Award), and Houston Texans Quarterback C.J. Stroud and his mother Kimberly Stroud, President of the C.J. Stroud Foundation (Community Champion Award).

While C.J. Stroud could not attend the ceremony in person, he sent along a video message of thanks that was played at the gathering. It is attached and a screen capture is shown below. Said Stroud, “I’m super grateful for this opportunity to receive the Community Champion Award...it just means so much to me. I love the City of Houston, and I hope I’ve been representing it well. I hope to be here for many, many years.”



Other dignitaries participating in the ceremony included Rev. Dr. Alexander E.M. Johnson of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, Texas Southern University Student Body President Katelayn Vault, Foley & Lardner MLK Oratory Contest Winner Montoia Murray, and representatives from the TSU Choir, Theater Department, and Debate Team.

This was the second year that Controller Hollins's Office hosted the Black History Month recognition ceremony. The ceremony was originally established under Controller Ronald Green, Houston's first Black City Controller. Hollins has served as Houston's City Controller since January 2024.

###

ABOUT CITY OF HOUSTON CONTROLLER'S OFFICE:

Established in 1903, the [City of Houston Controller's Office](#) is the cornerstone of financial oversight and accountability for America's fourth-largest city. With a mission to uphold Houston's fiscal integrity and protect resident's tax dollars, the office oversees a broad spectrum of the City's financial operations, including its budget, investments, and debts. Committed to transparency and fiscal responsibility, the Controller's Office is key to maintaining the economic vitality of Houston, contributing to its status as a thriving metropolis for its diverse community.

ABOUT CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS:

Chris Hollins, serving as Houston's City Controller since January 2024, brings a dynamic approach to City governance and financial management. With a rich background in legal practice and management consulting, coupled with innovative leadership as Harris County Clerk, Hollins is dedicated to enhancing the city's fiscal practices and community engagement. Educated at Morehouse College, Yale Law School, and Harvard Business School, Hollins's commitment to accountability and service excellence drives his mission to build a financially resilient Houston. Residing in the Third Ward with his family, his work is deeply informed by his strong community ties.