



**REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL
MIDWESTERN STATES
INDIANA, MICHIGAN, AND OHIO**

July 12, 2022

RE: Robert & Erma Hayden House Historic District, 1201 Gardner Avenue

Historic District Commission,

The Regional Council of the Bahá'ís of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio would like to offer this letter in support of the Robert Hayden House, which is under consideration for Historic designation. The report of the assessment of the qualifications of this property for historical designation shows extensive research and honors the family. The historic designation of this house will be a great step forward for the community of Ann Arbor, distinguishing that neighborhood and the city.

Robert Hayden's poems reflect a vision of his life during an important era. History will record his many achievements as a poet. He was elected to the American Academy of Poets in 1975. He was honored as Poet Laureate of the United States. He was awarded successive honorary degrees by Brown University, (1976) and Fisk, (1978). He served for a decade as an editor of the Bahá'í journal *World Order*. His wife Erma Hayden, a concert pianist and teacher was a prominent member of the Bahá'í Community. She served for many years on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ann Arbor and the National Teaching Committee of the Bahá'ís of the United States. The historic designation of this house could provide opportunities for many to learn more about the local and national achievements that they each earned for decades of work promoting the arts and for racial justice.

It is pleasing that the study committee has determined the Hayden House to be of exceptional importance in the context of modern American poetry due to its association with Robert Hayden. He writes, "We spoke in whispers when we spoke at all..." Perhaps this historic designation will allow his story and vision to rise from a whisper to a roar and highlight the significant contributions of Robert and Erma Hayden.

Sincerely,

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Midwest States
Marylou Miller
Secretary