



- Whereas, The month of April, 2016 marks the 125th Anniversary of the opening of the Custom House in Key West, FL; and
- Whereas, Built in 1891 and originally home to the island's customs office, postal service, and district courts, this four-story architectural marvel was built to keep pace with the increasing population and wealth accumulating from Key West's lucrative trade routes and maritime industries; and
- Whereas, Positioned adjacent to the U.S. Naval base, the Custom House was the site of many significant historical events, most notably the inquiry into the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana harbor in 1898; and
- Whereas, In 1932, the building transferred to the U.S. Navy and became headquarters for their Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico operations. When the Navy no longer required use of the building, it was declared surplus and abandoned for nearly twenty years. The Custom House was eventually purchased by the State of Florida's Land Acquisition Advisory Council in 1991 and leased to the Key West Art & Historical Society for use as a museum; and
- Whereas, Today, "Old 91" has been faithfully restored and stands on the harbor as a national landmark, an award-winning museum and official headquarters of the Key West Art & Historical Society, allowing visitors to experience two floors of exhibitions that weave together two centuries of history, art, people, and events; and
- Whereas, Not only does the Custom House offer an educational component through its historical accounting, but the sheer experience of being in a place so beautiful and unique, preserved through time, is something truly invaluable. The Customs House displays and curates world renowned and regional art. It serves as host to field trips for children and adults. It shares a rich history with our island and is truly something special to our City.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Craig Cates, and the entire Key West City Commission do hereby proclaim the month of April, 2016 as the

125th Anniversary of the Opening of the Custom House

In the "Southernmost City of the Continental United States." And I urge all citizens to celebrate accordingly.

WITNESS our hand and seal of the City of Key West, Florida, this 5th day of April, 2016

Jimmy Weekley, District I Commissioner

Craig Cates, Mayor

Richard Payne, District IV Commissioner

Billy Wardlow, District III Commissioner

Clayton Lopez, District VI Commissioner

Margaret Romero, District V Commissioner

Sam Kaufman, District II Commissioner