



August 29, 2020

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**In anticipation of construction of DuSable Park after years of waiting,
Coalition holds celebration of Chicago's founder, Jean Baptiste Pointe
DuSable on the day of his death, August 29th**

In anticipation of the construction of DuSable Park, The DuSable Coalition will host its annual memorial ceremony marking the death of Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable, at 401 North Michigan Avenue, August 29th, 2020 from 11:30 am – 12pm. This year's event has special significance as it takes place on the actual day of DuSable's death which occurred on August 29, 1818.

There will be a brief, socially distanced ceremony, with remarks from local leaders and dignitaries. Due to COVID-19 and current health conditions, this will be attended by local leaders and dignitaries by invite only. The wreath-laying will take place at the bust of DuSable located on the west side of Michigan Avenue by the Apple Store and the stairs to the Chicago River and will be streamed on Zoom and Facebook Live. This year the Coalition is collaborating with the Magnificent Mile Association in highlighting the centennial celebration of the DuSable Bridge. Faheem Majeed's Floating Museum featuring the inflatable structure, "Founders," will be erected at the DuSable Harbor over the weekend.

"This is a significant year for the DuSable Coalition," said former DuSable Heritage Association President, Dr. Serge J. Pierre-Louis. "The annual commemoration is a special moment to honor the contributions of the DuSable Family and with the recent movement on DuSable Park we are excited that DuSable's history will be that much more celebrated in Chicago."

The DuSable Coalition has advocated for the creation of DuSable Park in recognition of Chicago's first non-native settler, Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable and his wife, Kitihawa, a Potawatomie woman. The construction of DuSable Park, currently an undeveloped parcel, at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, has been in the making since 1987 when Mayor Harold Washington designated the land for DuSable Park. Plans to develop it gained some momentum under Mayor Richard M. Daley, and some initial remediation was completed. Thirty years later, we are still waiting.

Friends of the Parks urged the Chicago Park District to start the necessary first step by beginning thorium remediation on the contaminated parcel, which commenced in 2017 with US

Environmental Protection Agency funds from a successful lawsuit against the former owner of the parcel. In July 2020, construction on capping the land and seeding was completed.

There has also been forward movement to further the construction of DuSable Park in the form of a reaffirmation of a \$10 million commitment from Related Midwest in conjunction with approvals of their real estate development at 400 N. Lake Shore Drive. In July, Mayor Lori Lightfoot introduced an ordinance to provide an additional \$5 million commitment in Open Space Impact Fees (OSIF) for DuSable Park, and that ordinance passed the Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation last week on Thursday, August 20, 2020.

“Chicago, like many cities across the nation, is at a moment in history in which we must authentically examine the ways we have contributed to the injustices that Black lives experience daily,” said Juanita Irizarry, Executive Director of Friends of the Parks. “At a time when there are calls for statues and parks to be removed or renamed, we must prioritize our investments in monuments that honor more diverse contributions to our city and society. The construction of DuSable Park is one that is decades-long overdue without much legitimate explanation for its prolonged delay considering all the other downtown park investments that have taken priority over this spot—a prominent one which marks the entrance from Lake Michigan into the Chicago River and the new Riverwalk.”

Over the decades, the DuSable Park Coalition has included and collaborated with representatives from several local organizations and elected officials including Alderman Brendan Reilly, American Indian Center, Art Institute of Chicago, Bronzeville Children’s Museum, Chicago History Museum, Chicago River Rowing and Paddling Center, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Congressman Danny Davis, DuSable Heritage Association, DuSable Museum of African American History, Floating Museum, Friends of DuSable, Friends of the Parks, Haitian Consulate of Chicago, Streeterville Organization of Active Residents and the Sustainable Englewood Initiative. The group revitalized its efforts to galvanize support for and to encourage the Chicago Park District to move ahead with construction of DuSable Park, under the leadership of Friends of the Parks starting five years ago. Friends of the Parks also catalyzed the formation of the DuSable Park Advisory Council in 2018 to help ensure continuity and public input when the Chicago Park District revisits the 2006 DuSable Park Framework plan as this park project moves toward fruition.

Friends of the Parks (FOTP) is an Illinois not-for-profit organization founded in 1975. Our mission is to inspire, equip, and mobilize a diverse Chicago to ensure an equitable park system for a healthy Chicago. We advance our programmatic, educational, and advocacy work with the support of our members, donors and volunteers, and through our community, environmental, and government partnerships.

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