NAACP Loudoun Branch & the Historic Douglass High School

Preserving our Historic Connection, Shared Experience & Continuing the Journey to Equity in Education at LCPS
Our Historical Connection

NAACP Loudoun Branch was Birthed @Douglass
In the 1930s, African American residents in Loudoun County organized under the auspices of the County-Wide League for the purpose of addressing the inadequacy of education for African American students. Their goal was to secure a building for a secondary school for African American students.

NAACP Chief Legal Counsel & Dean of Howard University School of Law came to Loudoun to assess the situation and urged the community to form the NAACP Loudoun Branch to create a larger coalition of forces and resources. At that point, the newly formed branch assumed the leadership for the Douglass School initiative.

The NAACP created the pathway so that it was possible to negotiate for the school.
A Partnership Connected By Advocacy

- The operations and advocacy work of the NAACP Loudoun Branch has been linked to the Douglass School since its inception.
- Whether negotiating the physical and programmatic school build out or bringing attention to the disparities between students of Loudoun segregated schools until present day, Douglass High School, its Alumni & the NAACP Loudoun Branch have stood arm in arm in the fight for justice in education.
- The relationship between these two community pillars remains strong with the involvement of many Douglass Alumni in Branch in past and present leadership.
- In an effort to tell the comprehensive story of a communities self-reliance and resilience and continued commitment to equitable opportunities and outcomes for LCPS students of color, the NAACP is requesting to have permanent operational space and artifact display space in one
Space Utilization: Our Plans

- Along with insuring that every child has a fair and equitable opportunity to receive the best education possible in a safe, nurturing LCPS environment, the NAACP Loudoun Branch is dedicated to preserving our history and ensuring that the Loudoun County story of segregated education is told from the perspective of those with the lived experience.

- We intend to recreate the look and feel of the 1940s in the space given with artifacts and images detailing the history of Douglass & the NAACP.

- We will create operational space (1 office for the President) 1 secretarial/receptionist desk) to run the day-to-day operations of NAACP Loudoun Branch & continue the work of equity & civil rights in Loudoun.

- We will create exhibits as a community educational give back/ reinvestment for tours and community groups to visit, listen and learn.
The Answers to Your Questions

1. Where do you meet now?
   - Currently, all meetings are virtual. Pre-COVID, we held monthly general business meetings (3rd Mondays from 7pm-9pm), executive committee meetings (2nd Mondays from 7pm-9pm) and individual committee meetings (various evenings/virtual). General business meetings were at Mt. Olive Church in Leesburg and executive and committee meetings were at area libraries when space was available.

2. What is the advantage of this space versus where you are now?
   - Permanent space would allow us bring continuity to our operations for education, and celebratory event and have a secure location for our files, documents & artifacts. We would not have to compete for space in members home and our priceless artifacts will remain safe.

3. Would the groups be bringing desks and other items into the space?
   - We intend to populate the space with the items necessary to run the organization and house our museum space of artifacts and images.

4. What is the intent of Parks & Rec in the front space?
   - Not applicable.
5. What do you want to use the space for?
   Primarily, we will use the space for operations, artifact storage & small leadership meetings, LCPS tours when required.

6. Will you be bringing guests in the space?
   Yes, we will be open to limited guests if LCPS tours are scheduled. Our daily operations do not require guest visits regularly. It is the practice of our branch that all complaints are taken via phone or email.

7. What is the anticipated use of the space i.e. number of days per week, number of hours, time of day?
   We anticipate 15 – 20 hours per week during normal business hours. We would respect and honor the LCPS calendar and adjust accordingly. For executive committee meetings, we would follow the afore mentioned schedule.

8. How many people each day you are anticipated in the building?
   No more than two.
9. How do you plan to utilize space with everything else going on in the building?
   - We are flexible, our use would be operational during core business hours.

10. Would the groups be willing to work together to provide tours and information about the building to visitors?
   - Yes. We currently work with each group as needed and we welcome continued collaboration and partnerships.

11. How could the 3 groups work together as a cohesive unit to tell the story?
   - The NAACP is already working with the Edwin Washington Project on their work to tell the story of black schools & students in Loudoun. The NAACP is currently working with LCPS on their diversity and inclusion efforts including curriculum development. Finally, we continue to strengthen our relationships and bond with the Douglass Alumni to document the oral history and curate a living museum for the school using the artifacts of previous students, NAACP historic records and LCPS documentation. We started with offering scholarships in 2020.
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& the Historic Douglass High School
Preserving Our Historic Connection, Shared Experience & Continuing the Journey To Equity In Education at LCPS
August 23, 2021

Presentation to the Douglass Commemorative Committee Regarding LDAA’s Request for Dedicated Office Space

Good evening everyone,

My name is Carlotta Coates; I am the President of Loudoun Douglass High School Alumni Association (LDAA) I will speak on behalf of the LDAA organization in our request for dedicated space in Douglass High School.

My presentation is simple.

To the members of the LDAA community, Douglass High School is more than just a building. It is more than a school. It is more than a community center. To us, Douglass High School is a testament to the most difficult and unjust of challenges can be overcome. Douglass High School is our history and Douglass High School is our legacy.

The LDAA is a nonprofit organization, based here in Leesburg, VA founded in 1985 by alumni of Douglass High School, with the mission of providing financial support, via scholarships, to students seeking to further their education by attending college or trade school, who are descendants of those who attended Douglass High School or the Loudoun Training School. We raise funds throughout the year by holding different events and fundraisers, and award scholarships to qualified students annually. To-date, we have provided more than $300,000 in scholarships, and we hope to continue this legacy for years to come.

The LDAA Board of Directors is comprised 100% of volunteers. Most of the members of our Executive Board have full-time jobs, yet we spend hours each week volunteering for the organization, to keep it running, because this is our passion, and because we know how much the organization means to the members and alumni of Douglass High School. Since its inception, in 1985, the LDAA has always met within the Douglass High School building. We conduct our quarterly Board meetings and Special Meetings at the school, and have our annual picnic at the pavilion. Due to Covid-19 restrictions and the closure of Douglass High School for renovations, the LDAA has been meeting via Zoom calls and conference calls. This has not been optimal, as some of our members do not have access to computers or cell phones, and the technology required to conduct virtual meetings. We look forward to the time at which we can resume face-to-face meetings.

LDAA would like dedicated space for our Headquarters’ and to serve as our official location to conduct official business and to house documents and other materials. Having dedicated space in the renovated building will not only allow us to continue our mission but our presence in the building will be a reminder of all the obstacles we overcame to ensure a better future for the greater community. We hope to continue to use Douglass High School for meeting purposes, so we can continue to use funds towards scholarships and donations to the community rather than leasing office space. We anticipate the space will be used weekly for meetings (Board of Director meetings and/or committee meetings) and ad hoc (i.e. several times a week) for business/operation purposes (accessing files, mail, storage, etc.) The space will be limited to use by the LDAA Board of Directors and LDAA members for business purposes only. Less than 20 individuals are expected during weekly meetings, and 1-3 persons are expected daily for operations purposes. As we have done for the past 35 years, we will schedule our meetings around other events to avoid scheduling conflicts and minimize interference with the operations of the building during the day, and during weekends and evenings if special events were to be held.
LDAA has a unique relationship with Douglass High School, unlike any other organization. Our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents purchased the foundation that Douglass High School sits upon and now the entire county benefits from their efforts. We are:

- Descendants of those who were determined to build a high school for their children to receive an accredited formal education not just a training school for domestic service;
- Many of our members attended and/or graduated from Douglass High School; and
- LDAA is living history – through the Alumni and their descendants, we can continue to tell this history.

The community at large will benefit from the presence of LDAA in the renovated building; after all, our story brings forth a vital connection to history of Loudoun County. The story that began when a group of African American parents were told that they had to acquire land in order to get a Secondary Education in Loudoun County, so their children would not have to travel to Manassas, VA, or even as far as Washington, DC, to obtain a secondary education. The many sacrifices of time and their resources that the parents gave in order to raise the money ($4,000) to purchase the land which was then turned over to the School Board for the incidental amount of $1.00. The story that tells you without the Black students that attended this school from 1941 through 1968; there would be no reason for this gathering this evening. LDAA is more than willing to participate in providing tours and information to visitors, and some of our members have already expressed interest in providing tours and additional information on the school’s history.

Although the existing school was acquired through the blood, sweat, and tears of local Black residents, this is a story that transcends race – all community members, regardless of race or background, can benefit from OUR story. We want to send a message that transgressions can be overcome, and despite any challenges we face, if we persevere.

In this way, LDAA and the Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) share the same mission; like the LCPS, we too, want to ensure a climate of success, for all students. Our focus is, and always has been, on Douglass High School, the alumni, the descendants, and how to ensure opportunities for higher education. LCPS recently issued an apology to the Loudoun County black community, for past transgressions and the unfair treatment of black residents. The LCPS system acknowledged the apology is the first of several steps to heal the wounds of the past and move forward. The very act of allowing LDAA to have dedicated space would be a giant step in MEMORIAL RECLAMATION to the parents of Douglass students for all of their sacrifices to get the school built, as well as, the sacrifices they continued to make until the last graduating class. LDAA, with our strong and deeply rooted presence in the community, could help build the bridge from the past to the future, one in which the narrative is not solely focused on past wrongdoing but instead on how we as a community can work together to persevere for a brighter future for all.

In closing, Douglass High School is our legacy and our history.

Living alumni bring the history from the Loudoun Training School and Douglass High School who are able to provide first-person narratives.

LDAA is living history, and through us, our story will continue to be told.

GO Rams!
Proposed use of a Douglass HS room by the Edwin Washington Project (EWP)

Edwin Washington of Leesburg, first youth documented to keep his job while attending school.

Contact: www.edwinwashingtonproject.org  703-867-2056
The Edwin Washington Project is a Research Organization.

- **Black History Matters**, so the Washington Post and other media regularly cover us.
- Voted in 2019 the outstanding volunteer group in Loudoun County.
- Joined the Country-School Association of America (CSAA), studying historical rural education.
- CSAA calls us the largest member studying Black rural, segregated schools.
- We partner with the Library of Congress and others to use the latest technology.
- We enable local citizens to share their own resources.
- We help private citizens by scanning their historical documents for free.
- We are constantly expanding our research avenues of interest.

Contact: [www.edwinwashingtonproject.org](http://www.edwinwashingtonproject.org) 703-867-2056
Purpose of Space We Desire.

1. Understand how white and Black schooling differed, and why.
2. Provide Docent-supervised access to LCPS material managed by EWP as well as material owned by EWP or the public.
3. Host discussions with students, teachers and other scholars.
4. Facilitate a network of organizations interested in Black historical education in and outside Loudoun, like the CSAA.
5. Digitally preserve personal historical photos and other records.
6. Sponsor published research by ourselves, students and others, using interviews and other means to examine:
   • **Transportation, Use of Petitions, Former School Houses.** Medical and Nutritional Access, Comparison of Loudoun’s experiences with that of other counties and states. Biographies on educators, students and staff. Where did they serve? What were the conditions? Curriculum and access to books, laboratory equipment, etc.
   • More.
7. Docents can assist building reception staff and other stakeholders by briefing visitors on Douglass High School history or conducting tours.

Presentation by the Edwin Washington Project - Aug 23, 2021 703-867-2056
Current and Past Meeting Spaces

- EWP has met at Douglass for several years.
- In 2018, EWP held a county-wide public conference at Douglass attended by the Superintendent, faculty, students, and elected officials.
- The main office is at Round Hill, which is too small and hard to reach for our needs.
- We also meet in restaurants, library rooms, the Prosperity Baptist Church in Conklin, senior centers, etc.
- A central location at Douglass will enable researchers and the public to:
  - Use our documents when they meet.
  - Conduct comprehensive research.
  - More effectively share their stories or those of their ancestors.
We are grateful to have a location and the LCPS staff are terrific and very supportive. However:

- Round Hill is a cramped rectangle inside a large file room.
- Barely two feet separate tables from files.
- The space can only handle two people at a time.
- We can’t host discussions with volunteers or visiting scholars.
- The location is too remote for many people.
- Internet is not reliable.
- No room to display posters or artifacts.
Equipment and Furniture (all supplied by EWP)

- **Bookcase (20’x16”x7’):** For documents/artifacts. Will have glass doors and locks.

- **Three tables (6’x3’ each), with chairs:**
  - One for staff on which will be a PC, scanner, and other equipment. All scanning to be supervised by a docent.
  - The other two tables are for public use for research or meetings. Note: We will need access to high-speed internet and electrical plugs.

- **Glass display table and case**
  - Used for a rotating displays of project artifacts/papers, and objects loaned by the public. Locked, to protect material.

- **Posters, maps, and photos hung on walls** and elsewhere at Douglass.

- **Special storage cabinet for fragile objects.** (16”x24”)

- **Office equipment,** a printer and horizontal filing cabinet (36’’L x 19.’’W).
Proposed Space, Based on 645 sq ft. Configuration

- Docents always present, to protect artifacts and files.
- Public access only during published “office hours.” Mon-Friday.
- With Docent help, the public can examine artifacts (based on LCPS rules), conduct research or ask questions.
- During evenings and weekends EWP volunteers also conduct research or small meetings.
- Larger meetings might be held in the office or in the public area (in coordination with LCPS).

**Examples:**
- Conferences, such as at Douglass in 2018.
- Discussions with scholars and LCPS faculty or citizens on segregated education.
- Special events.

Contact: [www.edwinwashingtonproject.org](http://www.edwinwashingtonproject.org) / 703-867-2056
Douglass High School Commemorative Committee
August 23, 2021 Meeting

SUGGESTED NAMES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Monument Sign:

- Formerly Douglass High School
- Douglass High School
- Douglass High School Community Engagement Center or Douglass Community Engagement Center
- Douglass High School Educational & Performance Center or Douglass Educational & Performance Center
- Douglass High School Educational Event Center or Douglass Educational Event Center
- Douglass High School Community Outreach Event Center or Douglass Community Outreach Event Center
- Historic Douglass High School
- Douglass Countywide League Center
- Douglass Educational Center
- Douglass Community Resource Development Center
- Douglass

Building Sign – Peak of Roof:

- Formerly Douglass High School 1941-1968
- Douglass High School 1941-1968
Building Name:

I move that the Douglass High School Commemorative Committee recommend to the School Board that the original name of the school "Douglass High School" be placed in the peak of the roof with the years "1941 -1968" below the name to indicate the time frame in which the building served as a high school for African Americans in Loudoun County.

I move that the Douglass High School Commemorative Committee recommend to the School Board that the name of the facility and campus be

Alternative Motion
All, I agree that the Douglass High School name 1941-1968 should be on the arch in front of the school building. The word Resource was not in any of the suggested names we received last night. Since the site will not serve as a High School my rationalization for including the words resource and community in another suggested name follows.

Douglass
Community Resource Development Center

LCPS - developing young minds through their available resources, mandated by Federal and State for all in the community.

Loudoun County Parks and Rec. - developing all minds - resource for outside groups in need of event space and will coordinate all outside events and develop in-house recreational programs for Leesburg and surrounding community.

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Organizations vying for space will be using their own individual resources to tell story of Douglass.

LDAA - developing all minds - through personal stories photos, archives, programs and using docents to educate and convey the Douglass High history from 1941-1968 to all in community.

EWP - developing all minds - conveying facts of Loudoun County’s segregated education and sharing that research with community and other researchers through archives, photos, in person conversations with small groups, programs and docents.

NAACP - developing all minds - by relaying the institutional knowledge of the behind the scene efforts to construct Douglass High School and remind and educate the community that inequities still exist. The story will be told through archival documents and docents.
just a suggestion for the names, remove the high school from list.

Example: Douglass Educational Event Center etc.

Tammy Carter

Activities Coordinator THS
ISR teacher
Varsity Winter Cheer Coach
Dance Team Sponsor
Husky Travel Advisor
571-252-1960 ext. 81424

From: Sara Howard-O'Brien <Sara.HowardOBrien@lcps.org>
Sent: Friday, August 20, 2021 1:23 PM
To: LCPS-DCS-RENOVATION <DouglassRenovation@lcps.org>
Subject: Douglass High School August 23, 2021 Commemorative Committee Meeting documents

Please find attached the agenda for Monday night’s meeting along with the draft minutes for Aug. 9. The agenda includes two notations: 1) if voting occurs at the meeting it will be part of the open discussion (and not by written ballot as previously indicated) and 2) please wear your mask to the meeting. Also attached are the previously suggested building names along with an email from a committee member (Gert Evans) offering a name and the reasons for her suggestion.

We look forward to seeing you on Monday. Have a safe and good weekend.

Sara and Donna

Sara Howard-O'Brien
Land Management Supervisor
LCPS Planning Services
21000 Education Court
Ashburn VA 20148
571-252-1156
703-969-8919 (cell)

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Hello Sara,

I would like to add the name "Douglass" to the list of possible names for consideration. Thank you.

Gladys Burke
**ADJ Enterprises**
(703) 777-3480
[www.ADJEnterprises.com](http://www.ADJEnterprises.com)

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Draw in leads and customers through promotional marketing and branding for today's economy. Plan a trade show, golf tournament, corporate event, or conference with the right items to move your brand forward.

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-----Original Message-----
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Sara and Donna

Sara Howard-O'Brien
Dear Charles and Erica,

I regret that I will miss the August 23rd meeting of the Douglas High School Commemorative Committee due to a long ago scheduled commitment. As there is a possibility that I will miss the vote on the name of the school, I wanted to forward my thoughts.

We are members of the Douglas High School Commemorative Committee. As such, we have been tasked to make recommendations on how best to commemorate this historic building. I think the best way to commemorate it is by retaining the original name. The period of preservation is 1941 - 1968. Those were the years that this building served as an educational institution for Loudoun County’s African American population. This may not be something we are proud of but it is something we should never forget. Parents, grandparents, the NAACP, the Countywide League and others, fought to get this school built. They even purchased the land. Finally the first accredited high school for African American students was opened and remained in session until the courts ordered the integration of Loudoun’s schools. It was named Douglas High School.

That is a story we do not want to lose track of. We want to highlight the achievement of this reality by the community and celebrate it while at the same time using the story to educate those coming after us. We remember this period of history but the next generation may not unless we retain the name that opens the door to that story.

It is fortunate that the building will continue to provide valuable services for our community but we do not want to forget how it got its start.

Warmly,
Margaret Good

On Wed, Aug 18, 2021 at 6:12 PM Sara Howard-O’Brien wrote:

Thank you for letting us know that you will be absent from the meeting. Committee membership is a huge volunteer commitment and schedules sometimes necessitate missing a few meetings. The agenda for next Tuesday’s meeting will be distributed on Friday. Currently, the naming of the building is included among the items but it is hard to say whether there will be time to get through the entire agenda. If you would like to express your thoughts/preferences to the Co-Chairs, you may send an email to the Committee email address, DouglassRenovation@lcps.org, or simply respond to all in this email, and we will make sure the co-chairs, and if you would like, the entire Committee receives your information.

Sara
From: Margaret Good <margarettgood1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 18, 2021 5:29 PM
To: Sara Howard-O'Brien <Sara.HowardOBrien@lcps.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Douglas HS

Dear Sara,

I regret that I have to miss another meeting of this group. I hate it. I will look forward to seeing the minutes. I am also hoping the name of the building will not be decided on Monday. Do you think it will? If so, maybe I need to write to the chairs. I would hate to see them change it in any way so maybe I need to send my plea to them.

Thoughts?

Margaret