

WELCOME TO THE DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Loudoun Douglass Alumni Association, and as Co-Chairs of the Commemorative Committee, we would like to thank you for volunteering to serve on the Douglass High School Commemorative Committee. Douglass High School is an important part of not only Loudoun County and Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) history but also the national African American struggle for equal education. Constructed in 1941 on land purchased by the Countywide League (for \$4,000)-and later transferred to the School Board for \$1, Douglass High School was the County's first accredited high school for African American students and remained segregated from 1941 to 1968, when Loudoun schools integrated under court order.

The current renovation project was approved by the Loudoun County School Board on November 29, 2016, as a part of the Capital Improvement Program budget. The action was in conjunction with the approval of funding for The North Star School, currently under construction on the former C. S. Monroe Technology Center site in Leesburg. With the relocation of the Douglass School programs to The North Star School this summer, renovation of Douglass High School will begin.

Commemorative works will be key elements incorporated in the building renovation to tell the story of Douglass High School. The charge of the Committee will be to review and develop options, both permanent and temporary, for relevant historic artifacts, memorabilia, and other possible interpretive building displays. The Committee's mission will be to determine how the history and importance of Douglass High School will be shared and to recommend commemorative components for School Board action and funding, as necessary.

LCPS staff has been receiving community input since December 2019, when the first Douglass School community information meeting was held. In addition to community-wide feedback, staff has specifically sought the assistance of key stakeholders in formulating commemorative ideas and concepts. A copy of the initial commemorative concepts presentation prepared by LCPS staff in conjunction with the project's consulting historic architect, Beyer Blinder Belle (BBB), is provided for the Committee's background information. The stakeholders, including the Loudoun Douglass Alumni Association (LDAA), Loudoun's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream Committee (MLK Committee), and the Edwin Washington Project, have provided a wealth of recommendations. These have been assembled into the enclosed Commemorative Suggestions Tracking Chart and coupled with a graphic identifying potential commemorative opportunity spaces within the interior as well as ~~and~~ on the grounds of Douglass High School. Combined, these recommendations afford a foundation upon which the Commemorative Committee may begin its work. At the end of the school year, on June 28, 2021, there will be an opportunity to tour Douglass High School one final time before construction and renovation work begins.

We thank you in advance for your service to this important project. Enclosed is the Committee roster and the planned meeting schedule. Also enclosed is a summary of Virginia's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). All Committee correspondence should utilize the DouglassRenovation@LCPS.org email address and LCPS staff will explain this further on May 24. We look forward to seeing you in-person on May 24th at 6:30 pm at the Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library (510 Principal Drummond Way, Leesburg).

At least for our first few meetings, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in line with current public-health mitigation recommendations and orders, everyone attending Committee meetings will be required to wear a face covering during our meetings and gatherings. Distancing protocols will also be in place for seating during our meetings. Precautions to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19 are necessary for everyone; if you do not feel well (a fever and symptoms such as a cough or difficulty breathing) on the day of any Committee meeting please self-isolate and let us know of your absence.

Thank you and again, if you have questions in advance of May 24, please reach out directly to DouglassRenovation@LCPS.org or 571-252-1050.

Charles Avery & Erica Bush, Co-Chairs
Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Enclosed Documents:

- Douglass High School Commemorative Committee Roster
- 2021 Meeting Schedule, as of May 12, 2021
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Guidelines
- November 2020 Douglass High School Renovation Commemorative Concepts Presentation
- Commemorative Suggestions Tracking Chart, as of May 1, 2021
- Commemorative Opportunity Spaces/Interior and Exterior Douglass High School
- Douglass High School: Legacy of a Changing Era by Elaine E. Thompson (Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Loudoun Magazine February 2004)

Additional Documents Posted at: <https://www.lcps.org/Page/224865>