HONOR BLACK HISTORY: VISIT INDY PARKS!

As Indy Parks creates places and experiences that inspire, Indy Parks is proud to honor the contributions of African-American trailblazers, visionaries, and remarkable leaders in our community. With over a century of history advancing the value of parks, Indy Parks is committed to protecting and enhancing the community’s assets for the future. We will be a leader in making Indianapolis a vibrant, happy and healthy place to live. By providing premier greenspaces and recreation opportunities, we will connect all residents to nature, to the community, and to themselves. Our work is vital to contributing to the economic, social, and environmental health of our city.

### BERtha ROss

Bertha Ross Park | 3700 N. Clifton St.
As president of School #41’s PTO, Bertha Ross organized a baseball league for children between the ages of 7 to 15. Each year, Ross and her husband would raise money to supply 12 teams. Other groups and businesses helped to sponsor the teams by issuing money to furnish bats, mitts, uniforms, and coaches. Baseballs were provided by the Park Department.

Anyone within the age limits could play in this league, but Ross set one condition: any child playing in her league could not get into any trouble.

### EVa TALEY

Eva Talley Park | 3100 S. 7th Street

### Frank Beckwith Park

Frank Beckwith Park | 100 E. 29th Street

### Andrew Ramsey Park

Andrew Ramsey Park | 310 W. 42nd Street

### Oscar Charleston Park

Oscar Charleston Park | 2000 E. Roosevelt Avenue

### Rev. Charles Williams Park

Rev. Charles Williams Park | 3252 Sutherland Ave.

### Frank Young Park

Frank Young Park | 1000 Udell Street

### HONORING BLACK CULTURE THROUGH INDY PARKS

THROUGH INDY PARKS

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park & Landmark for Peace Memorial was named for the famous Civil Rights Leader Rev. Dr. King, Jr.

Oscar Charleston was considered one of the best players in the Negro Baseball League.

Bertha Ross is best remembered for founding the Golden Hill Junior Baseball League. She believed providing organized recreation activities for young boys would deter vandalism and petty crime.

Influential Black Culture:

Leaving a Lasting Legacy in the City of Indianapolis

It is with great honor that Indy Parks and Recreation presents to you, “Pride of the Parks”. We recognize the significant impact that African Americans have had on our community, and have chosen to highlight the achievements and contributions of this special group of trailblazers by naming several of our most beloved parks and facilities in their honor.

This brochure provides a brief overview of a few of the outstanding individuals who have contributed to the Indianapolis community and touched the lives of the people of our city. These individuals represent a diversity of backgrounds, experiences and achievements.

We hope that you will take the opportunity to learn more about these important people whose names and legacies are preserved through Indy Parks.

A. Marshall Walter Taylor is the namesake for the Major Taylor Velodrome.

B. Eva Talley-Sanders is the first African American woman to hold the rank of Deputy Chief with the Marion County Sheriff’s Department.

C. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park & Landmark for Peace Memorial was named for the famous Civil Rights Leader Rev. Dr. King, Jr.

D. Oscar Charleston was considered one of the best players in the Negro Baseball League.

E. Bertha Ross is best remembered for founding the Golden Hill Junior Baseball League. She believed providing organized recreation activities for young boys would deter vandalism and petty crime.

Visit Indy Parks!

200 E. Washington Street, Suite 2301
Indianapolis, IN 46204

317.327.PARK
indy.gov/parks
@indy_parks
indy.parks
**FRANK BECKWITH**

Beckwith Memorial Park | 2302 E. 30th Street

A native of Indianapolis, Frank R. Beckwith was born in 1904 to former slaves. He grew up to become a successful attorney and an industrious civil rights activist. He was instrumental in the naming of Douglass Park (now Frederick Douglass Park) and worked on the establishment of the Indianapolis ABCs and the Chicago American Giants, as well as other Negro League Teams. He retired from baseball in 1945, but continued to work as a league official and senator. In 1987, he was inducted into the Negro Leagues Baseball Hall of Fame.

**DORIS COWHERD**

Cowherd Park | 4050 N. Irvington Avenue

In 1899, Doris Cowherd was born the daughter of share cropers who lived in the city of Indianapolis. As a young woman, she moved to Chicago, Illinois, where she married, raised a family and began her career. She returned to Indianapolis in 1953, where she served as the president of the Indianapolis Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She encouraged her community to get involved with the parks, especially the one named for her as a token of her support.

**JAMES FOSTER GAINES**

James Foster Gains Park | 2100 N. Tibbs Avenue

James Foster “Bruiser” Gaines served 27 years in the Indianapolis Police Department. Gaines was born and raised in Indianapolis and attended Crispus Attucks High School, where he played football and basketball. He later served in the Navy from 1944-46, and managed the PAU project. During his time in the Police Force, Gaines developed a passion for using his time, energy and resources to mentor the youth and assisiting people in need in the city of Indianapolis.

**GRAHAM EDWARD MARTIN**

Lt. Junior Grade Graham Edward Martin Park | 3202 Fall Creek Pkwy E. Drive

Graham Edward Martin graduated from Crispus Attucks High School, Indiana University, and Howard University before enlisting in the Navy in 1944. He was a native of Indianapolis and served in the U.S. Navy. Martin was the first black officer to fly a jet plane after the armed forces opened their ranks to blacks in the early 1950s. In his early years, he served as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. Martin served four years in the Navy as a ship commander with the rank Lt. Junior Grade. Upon his return to Indianapolis, he coached varsity football and baseball at Crispus Attucks from 1947 to 1982.

**AL E. POLIN**

Al E. Polin Park | 124 E. 22nd Street

Having revisited in the Mapleton Fall Creek area for his entire life, Al E. Polin is a community activist who has helped keep this Indianapolis neighborhood thriving. Before retiring, Polin worked as the coordinator for the Quality of Life Human Relations at the Indianapolis Zoo. He continues to stay actively involved in his community and serves on the Indianapolis Community Policing Board. Indianapolis Neighborhood Coordinating Council as well as the Five Indianapolis Commission. Polin is also active in promoting youth activities.

**RE. MOZEL GAINES**

Rev. Mozel Sanders Park | 1300 N. Belmont Street

Minister and community leader Rev. Mozel Sanders began his life in Indianapolis in 1945. After he was hired at a church during the day and preached at a local church at night. In 1959 he became the pastor of the Mount Vernon Moravian Church and served until his death in 1988.

Sanders hosted a daily radio program and was the founder of a national job training program. He started a Thanksgiving dinner event to feed individuals and families in need. The Mozel Sanders Thanksgiving Dinner continues to this day, bringing together hundreds of volunteers and serving thousands of meals each Thanksgiving Day.

**CHARLES WATKINS**

Watkins Park | 2800 E. 25th Street

A native of Indianapolis, Marshall Walter Taylor began his bicycle racing career in Indiana, but was unable to train in the area because race track closures were common. Cowherd was a role model to the young people who lived in her neighborhood. She was instrumental in establishing the concept of neighborhood participation and cooperation. She encouraged her community to get involved with the parks, especially the one named for her as a token of her support.

**WILLIAM WHITFIELD**

Whitfield Park | 6025 W. 16th Street

William Whitfield was a 12-year veteran with the Indianapolis Police Department. On patrol, in a predominantly white neighborhood, he continually exposed and saved lives, and, sadly, died in the hospital. He was the first black officer in the line of duty in Indianapolis. A plaque commemorating his service is on display in Watusi McDonald Park.

**RE. CHARLES WILLIAMS**

Rev. Charles Williams Park | 3252 Serramonte Avenue

Charles Williams was a dedicated basketball player who graduated from Arsenal Technical High School where he was co-captain of the basketball team in his senior year and carried a 14.3 average for the season. He then went to the University of Evansville and thereafter the University of Evansville for basketball. His dedication to the sport won him honors including All-American, All-Region, and All-Sectional player. touches of the game that continued to flourish in December 1977.

**OSCAR CHARLES TAYLOR**

Oscar Taylor Park | 2302 E. 30th Street

Oscar Taylor Park is a 120-year-old athletic field located in Indianapolis along with his 15 brothers and sisters. He was one of the most influential contributors to the Negro League baseball teams here in the city. He played for the Indianapolis ABCs and the Chicago American Giants, as well as other Negro League Teams. He retired from baseball in 1945, but continued to work as a league official. In 1987, he was inducted into the Negro Leagues Baseball Hall of Fame.

**RE. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

Martin Luther King, Jr. Park | 1702 N. Broad Street

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was a Baptist minister, social activist, and an influential leader in the African American Civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights through nonviolent and civil disobedience. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his efforts to end racial discrimination in the United States.

**FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

Frederick Douglass Park | 1845 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive

Frederick Douglass was a native of Indianapolis, but was unable to train in the area because race track closures were common. Douglass was a role model to the young people who lived in her neighborhood. She was instrumental in establishing the concept of neighborhood participation and cooperation. She encouraged her community to get involved with the parks, especially the one named for her as a token of her support.

**WES MONTGOMERY**

Wes Montgomery Park | 3400 N. Hesston Lane

A native of Indianapolis, Wes Montgomery launched his music career from Indianapolis, to become nationally and internationally recognized as one of the world’s great guitarists. Montgomery is often described as one of the most influential jazz musicians to have come out of Indianapolis. His influence extended far beyond his city and he became revered throughout the world for his talent.

**FREEMAN B. RANSOM**

Ransom Park | 200 N. Indianola Avenue

Influential lawyer, businessman and civic activist Freeman Bailey Ransom came to Indianapolis in 1910 after completing his law degree. He was an influential leader who sought to promote civil rights and equality for all human beings. He was a key figure in the local African American community and is remembered for his dedication to the cause, honor and equality for all artists, musicians and jazz historians.

**JUAN SOLOMON**

Juan Solomon Park | 6100 Brownsville Drive

Juan Solomon was highly involved in civic activities within the Indianapolis African-American community. Solomon served as director of the Community Service Council, Indianapolis Urban League, and was a board member of the Indianapolis Museum of Art. He also served as a long-time columnist for the Indianapolis Recorder.

**Oscar Charleston**

A native of Indianapolis, Oscar Charleston was a baseball player who was known for his powerful bat and speed on the bases. He was a key figure in the Negro Leagues and helped to break down racial barriers in baseball. Charleston spent 33 seasons playing for and managing the Indianapolis ABCs and the Chicago American Giants, as well as other Negro League Teams. He retired from baseball in 1945 and went on to work as a baseball writer and commentator for the Indianapolis Star. In 1970, Charleston’s contributions to baseball were recognized through his election to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

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