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Historic Heritage Marker Commemorating Broward County's "Colored" Beach

Unveiled

During Black History Month

Ceremony planned Friday, February 13, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

It's a five mile strand of beach in Broward County that takes us back in time to an era of segregation when African-Americans were forced to use beaches that were separated from the generally white population.

What was once commonly referred to as "colored" beach, we now call John U. Lloyd Beach State Park—and you may have never been aware of its unique and important history until now.

An historic heritage marker, outlining the black history of this state beach will be unveiled at a



special ceremony on February 13, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at the Manatee Pavilion located inside John U. Lloyd Beach State Park in Dania Beach.

"This historic heritage marker will forever showcase the significant history of this beach and educate all residents and visitors who pass through here," said Broward County Commissioner Sue Gunzburger, who, last year, earmarked up to \$2500 in discretionary funds to have a commemorative plaque placed at the beach. The Broward County Historical Commission and members of county staff worked throughout the year to have the State's Division of Historical Resources declare the beach a place of historical significance under the State Historic Marker Program.

Commissioner Gunzburger will be joined by special guests who once enjoyed the beach as youngsters and are now part of its history. Historians, elected officials and community members are also expected to attend. The public is invited and encouraged to come.

As early as 1927, Black residents were denied the equal use and enjoyment of Broward County's beaches. In 1946, a delegation of Black residents addressed the Board of

County Commissioners to petition for “a public beach for colored people in Broward County.” In 1954, Broward County purchased beach property south of the Port Everglades Inlet in what is known today as John U. Lloyd Beach State Park for use of people of color throughout Broward County at a cost of \$1.6 million. The county promised easy access, but the only way to get to the beach was by ferry or a long trip over land. That prompted Dr. Von D. Mizell and Eula Mae Johnson, leader of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to lead a series of “wade-ins” at the beaches in Fort Lauderdale in 1961.

One year later, a judge refused a request by the city to stop the wade-ins and that decision led to the desegregated beaches.

In 1970, that part of the beach became part of John U. Lloyd Beach State Park.

Timed to coincide with this event, the Fort Lauderdale History Center/Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Inc. will debut its new photography exhibit, *Snapshots: Fort Lauderdale’s Black History* in February in honor of Black History month.

A special segment of the exhibit will recount the efforts of local blacks to acquire their own beach in the days of segregation when the Fort Lauderdale beach was off-limits to non-whites. The exhibit can be viewed during the month of February from Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m-5 p.m. and Sunday noon-5 p.m. Admission to the Museum is \$10 per person and is free to Historical Society members.

For more information on the exhibit, please call 954-463-4431 ext. 13.

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