



BLACKS IN GREEN

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Media Contact

Elza Ter-Arutyunov

872-316-0297

elza@blacksingreen.org

**Blacks in Green Launches New Art Installation and Till House Museum
Groundbreaking Ceremony at Emmett Till Birthday Celebration**

*Community celebration on Sunday, July 23 includes ice cream, line dancing, petting
zoo, live entertainment and more*

CHICAGO, IL — July 23, 2023: Residents are invited to a community celebration honoring Emmett Till's 82nd heavenly birthday. The free event will take place on July 23 from 1:00pm to 6:00pm at the Emmett & Mamie Till-Mobley House Museum, Garden and Theatre, 6427 South St. Lawrence Avenue, in the West Woodlawn neighborhood of Chicago.

"This is our second annual birthday celebration in Emmett's honor," said Naomi Davis, Founder and CEO of Blacks in Green (BIG). "This year is especially momentous given the new art installation by Germane Barnes and the upcoming groundbreaking to kick off the exterior renovations of the Till House Museum. We are thrilled to host this event and invite the community to join us in celebrating Emmett Till's life and legacy, and to learn more about the Till House Museum's future plans.

The event will launch an art installation and exhibition at the Till House Museum by internationally renowned artist, Germane Barnes, titled "Be Careful, I Always Am." Inspired by the call and response of a guardian and their ward, this project highlights the necessity of care and safety in the built environment.

"The story of Emmett Till is one that many young Black males learn at a young age. To create an installation that centers the protection and care that a guardian has for their child is one that speaks to many of us that share a lineage of Chicago, the Great Migration, and an ever present and loving Mother," said Germane Barnes, Director of Studio Barnes and Associate Professor and Director of the Master of Architecture Graduate Program at the University of Miami School of Architecture.

The Till House Museum will be surrounded by a three-story-high scaffold which represents the structure of protection Mamie provided for Emmett and their loved ones. Cladding the scaffold is a decorative vinyl wrap, inspired by Emmett's iconic tie and love for Superman comic books, which

incorporates oral histories provided by Preservation Futures. At the ground level are hammocks that allow visitors to become a part of the installation. This important history canonizes the legacy of the Great Migration leading to the arrival of the Till family to the South Side of Chicago and their connection to the larger African American community.

The installation will be open to the public from July 23 - November 27, 2023, and is next door to the Till House Museum.

“In capturing the reminiscences and recollections of Till family members and neighbors, the Till House Oral History Project centers the environment of freedom, joy, and love that Emmett was raised in and that Blacks in Green is working to build in West Woodlawn and beyond. Preservation is a centerpiece of BIG’s vision for the future,” said Jonathan Solomon, preservationist and partner at Preservation Futures.

The art installation and presentation by Germane Barnes is part of BIG’s July installment of the Chautauqua Woodlawn Distinguished Lecture Series, featuring wondrous topics and gifted thinkers as monthly guest lecturers, to kickstart next level Woodlawn tourism and wider enjoyment of BIG’s Sustainable Square Mile beautiful life.

As a leader in sustainable community and high-performance building practices, BIG will break ground on the landmarked exterior renovation of the home on July 23. BIG has planned these exterior improvements to incorporate high-performance, net-positive green practices that meet [PHIUS](#), [Living Building Challenge \(LBC\)](#) and [SITES \(Sustainable Sites Initiative\)](#) standards, marking a turning point in the new era of energy efficiency and sustainable communities - an integral part of our Sustainable Square Mile initiative in West Woodlawn.

Exterior renovations will include masonry repairs, door replacements, and the installation of high-performance energy-efficient windows and a biovoltaic (green/solar) roof - funded by the City of Chicago’s Adopt-a-Landmark Fund grant. This is the first phase of the building’s renovations, which will transform the landmark into a cultural heritage destination house museum, garden, and community performance theater by 2025.

Additional activities are planned for all ages including, an ice-cream bar, line dancing and lessons, petting zoo with horse and pony rides, face painting and live entertainment throughout the day featuring Dutchess the DJ, Alysha Monique & The Family Divine, Bryson Allison and Wyatt Waddell. We will also have a short presentation on BIG’s partnership with Deeply Rooted Dance Theater and the [Fertile Ground Play & Casting Call](#), as part of our Together We Will funded project.

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About Blacks in Green

Blacks in Green (BIG) is an environmental economic development non-profit that serves as a bridge and catalyst among communities and their stakeholders in the design and development of green, self-sustaining, mixed-income, walkable villages within Black neighborhoods with its Sustainable Square Mile system – designed to ensure that every household can walk-to-work, walk-to-shop, walk-to-learn, walk-to-play, own the businesses and the land, and live the conservation lifestyle. Learn more on our website at www.blacksingreen.org.