inFORM

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A City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation Publication
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A Black History Special Edition

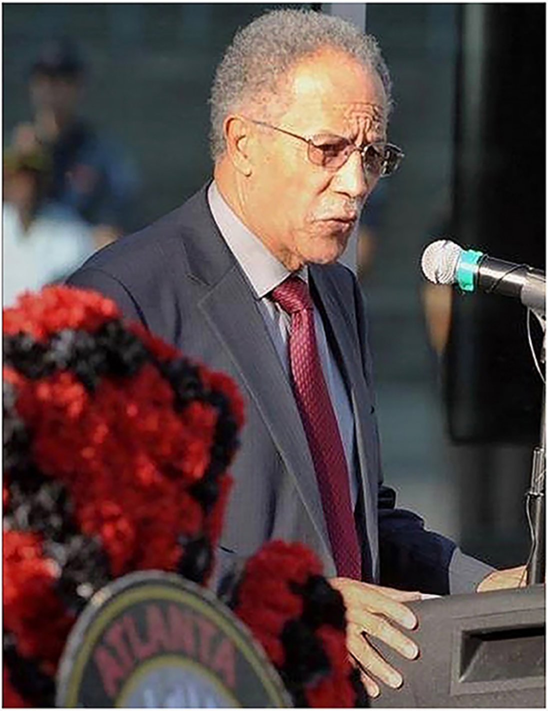
A Message from Commissioner Justin Cutler

Atlanta is widely recognized for its rich cultural and artistic history, both past and present. Prominently present during the civil rights movement, there exists a long list of passionate activists who dedicated their lives to social justice, equality and public service. On roster, former mayors Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Congressman John Lewis, SCLC co-founder Rev. Joseph Lowery, Founder, Hosea Williams of Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless and SNCC co-founder and NAACP Chairman Julian Bond. The contributions from this great city are vast!

In this issue of *Inform*, we share history about other major contributors for which some of our parks, recreation centers and other facilities are named in "Telling Our Story." We hope you will enjoy this Black History special edition!

Telling our Story

C.T. Martin



For 30 years, Atlanta City Council member Clarence Terrell “C.T.” Martin represented the people of District 10. Affectionately referred to by his peers as the “Dean,” he was a staunch advocate for justice and equality. Council member Andrea L. Boone, who now represents District 10, says Martin worked alongside her father and uncle during the civil rights era. “I was his assistant for nearly 20 years,” Boone shared of her mentor. “He taught me to always fight for the beloved community!”

Born on April 5, 1937, at Atlanta’s Grady Memorial Hospital, Martin began his life of service as a social worker registering voters with the NAACP. He played a pivotal role in the election of many of Georgia’s first African American mayors including former mayors Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young. Martin was also the first campaign manager for Congressman John Lewis and notably received a Presidential Appointment to the White House Domestic Policy Council by President Barack Obama.

C.T. Martin is also remembered for one of his most prized hometown achievements: advocating for the demolition of a drug-infested apartment complex to construct a community center. “His main focus was to get a pool in the community for Black children,” Boone states. The Department of Parks and Recreation completed the $27 million Adamsville Natatorium and Community Center in 2003. In 2017, the facility was renamed the C.T. Martin Natatorium and Recreation Center in his honor. The avid motorcyclist and ballroom dancer rode a horse to the ceremony. C.T. Martin passed away in 2021. We remember his remarkable legacy!

Photo Courtesy: District 10

William Walker

It all started in a tiny, tin-top building that the community referred to as the “shed.” Coach William Walker says, “It wasn’t much. There was a game room to the left, an office to the right and a small gym with one set of bleachers. But when we had games, it was standing room only!” he fondly remembers. The “shed” later became Ben Hill Park Recreation Center.

Parents considered the “shed” a safe place for children to learn sports, receive counsel, and experience the value of community. Whatever programs kids were interested in, Coach Walker made it happen, whether their parents could afford it or not.

Though small, the location was well known. “When the Hawks came to Atlanta, a lot of the ball players [Bill Bridges and Lou Hudson] came here to play,” says Walker. NBA and NFL players alike, lived in the community and used the facility. Dominique Wilkins and his brothers played at the center during summers when Wilkins was a student at University of Georgia.

Walker’s career with Parks and Recreation spans over 50 years starting at “The Bluffs” (formerly Vine City) in 1966. It was a playlot, with no building. Walker transported equipment in his Volkswagen. “When it rained, I sat in the car until it stopped,” Walker expresses. There was even a portable swimming pool.

“Coach” as he is sometimes referred, played football and basketball at George Washington Carver Boy’s Club. It was the only place African Americans were allowed to enjoy recreation in Atlanta back then. After college, he coached competitive teams at Butler Park. Adult basketball games were played outdoors well past midnight. It brought the community together. However, there were no uniforms or sports equipment. Walker paid for the items himself.

In 1971, Walker became the Facility Manager at the “shed.” “With a gym, I could do wonders!” Walker exclaims. Word spread quickly. “People would come from far and wide…Douglasville, Mableton, Powder Springs, City of South Fulton and even north of the city. His programs have always been well sought after,” attests DPR Data Analyst Lisa Bond.

For 22 years, William Walker worked two full-time jobs, one with Parks and Recreation and the other with the state as a mental health and addiction outreach counselor and later program coordinator. After 15 years of petitioning for a new building, the Ben Hill Park Recreation Center was constructed in 1997. Walker’s efforts earned him the City’s highest honor, the Phoenix Award.

In 2016, Ben Hill was renamed William Walker Recreation Center. In 2019, the Atlanta Hawks and State Farm launched the city’s first Good Neighbor Club there. Coach Walker is considered a humanitarian and community advocate. “He always wants what’s best for the community and what’s best for kids,” shares Lisa Bond. “He’s old school, a gentleman, upright and two-billion percent a doer!” March 1, Mr. Walker turns 85. He still shows up to work and he’s still getting the job done!

More on the Legend Here:
https://patch.com/georgia/cascade/legendary-ben-hill-coach-william-walker-receives-high81b345e5d5

RESURGENS
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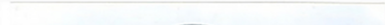
1865
ATLANTA, GA.

Join us next issue, for a special feature on two amazing women. Mattie Freeland for whom a park was named in 2022 and Sharon Lester for whom our tennis court is named at Piedmont Park.

LEGENDARY GOLFER MAKES HISTORY
Alfred "Tup" Holmes



Read about Legendary Golfer, Alfred "Tup" Holmes

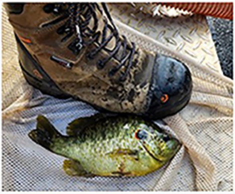
GOVERNOR KEMP RECOGNIZES DPR ARBORISTS

City of Atlanta staffers joined the Georgia Forestry Commission and Georgia Tree Council in receiving a well-deserved Georgia Arbor Day Proclamation from Governor Brian Kemp. A leader in the state for best practices in urban forestry, the City was acknowledged by State agencies and the Governor's

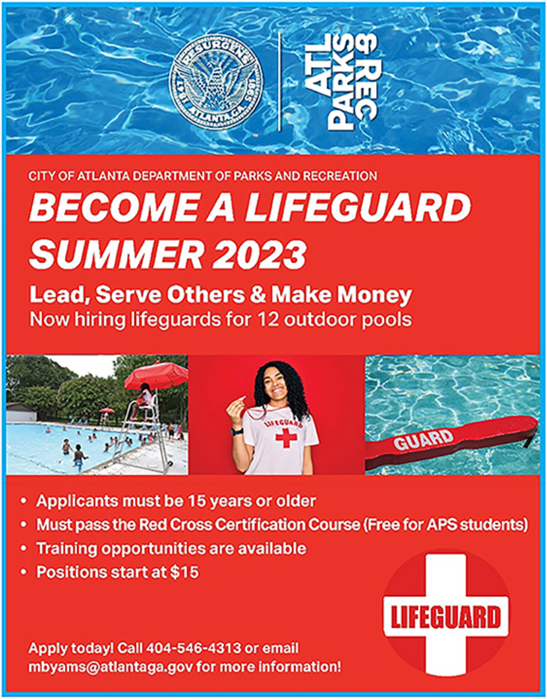
Office for its accomplishments. In the past three years, the City of Atlanta has added over 600 acres of parkland, most of it heavily forested.

An Old Sport for a New Generation

There are tremendous benefits to fishing including improved mental health, reduced stress, greater focus and connecting with nature. Many adults recall fishing with their parents or grandparents "back in the day." It was part of growing up. However, we don't hear much about fishing as a free time sport these days. The Department of Parks and Recreation and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are hoping to change that. Over the past few months, Georgia DNRs *Gateway to Fishing* stocked public waters with native game fish throughout the state and in Atlanta City parks including Adams, Piedmont, Loring Heights, Chastain and Falling Waters. DNR Fishing Coordinator, Michael Sellers says Georgia has the largest species inventory in the nation! Making fishing fun and equitably accessible to everyone is goal. "Urban fishing is a big push nationwide," says Sellers. An Atlanta native who frequented Brownwood Park growing up, he explains why the *Gateway to Fishing* program means so much: "I want to make sure that our kids have opportunities to get outside to experience nature and wildlife here in Georgia." The former Boys and Girls Club of America Director is excited to offer a community fishing program through DNR. "I've always had a passion for giving back to kids, particularly those in at-risk situations, because I was one of those kids not long ago." *Gateway to Fishing* started two years ago and offers wildlife exploration and fishing opportunities for all ages. Fishing supplies are provided. Sellers hopes to expand DNRs collaboration with City of Atlanta Parks and Recreation and make fishing accessible to every Atlanta resident. A *2023 Fishing 4 Fun* event is scheduled at Chastain Park April 20. To find out more about DNRs Gateway to Fishing, call 706-557-3101 or visit https://georgiawildlife.com/gateway-fishing.



LIFEGUARDS NEEDED!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CITY OF ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

BECOME A LIFEGUARD SUMMER 2023

Lead, Serve Others & Make Money

Now hiring lifeguards for 12 outdoor pools

- Applicants must be 15 years or older
- Must pass the Red Cross Certification Course (Free for APS students)
- Training opportunities are available
- Positions start at $15

Apply today! Call 404-546-4313 or email mbyams@atlantaga.gov for more information!

The Department of Parks and Recreation is planning to hire 100 lifeguards, ages 15 and up, for its summer swim season. If you're not currently certified, we can help. Sign up for our lifeguard training sessions today and spread the word!

Registration is ongoing.

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

In February, DPR debuted a unique community program focused on mental health. The event, appropriately named: "More than a Cut: Barbers, Beauty and Mental Health." In communities of color, transparent discussions about life and personal experiences, is a given in most barbershops and beauty salons. The outcome is therapeutic with service providers and patrons each benefitting from shared advice, candor and much needed laughter at times. It's a moment to exhale. Several partners participated including members from the Confess Project of America, Atlanta Public Schools Office of Engagement, Grady Health System, APS Student Support and Intervention as well as local barbers, beauticians and nail techs who provided free services to youth. Students from DPRs Teen Leaders Academy attended enjoying refreshments and a special photo op with Mayor Andre Dickens who provided greetings. The event aligned well with the mayor's "2023 Year of the Youth" initiative which aims to ensure that Atlanta's children, youth and young adults have the resources necessary to thrive.

Event Coverage Here: https://atlinq.com/more-than-a-trim-atlanta-barber-beauty-and-mental-health-event/?

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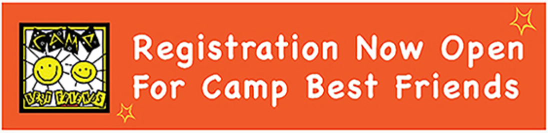

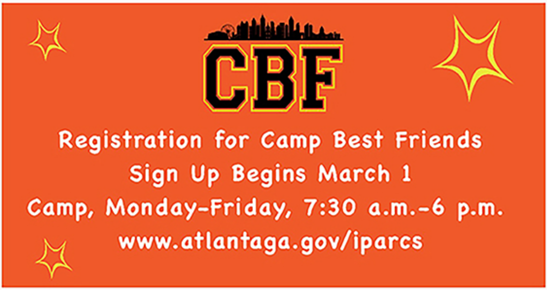
CBF
Registration for Camp Best Friends
Sign Up Begins March 1
Camp, Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
www.atlantaga.gov/iparcs

Click here for more information
on Camp Best Friends!

Registration is now open for Track and Field
Season Starts March 11
Sign up at www.atlantaga.gov/iparcs
Click here for more information!

Registration for
Spring Break Teen Basketball Tournament is now open
Camp April 4-7
Sign up at Zaban Recreation Center.
Click here for more information.

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