DHA BLM Statement

The events of the past few weeks surrounding the tragic death of George Floyd call on all of us to reflect and take a stand. The Board of DuSable Heritage Association (DHA) reaffirms its stance against systemic racism and social injustice. The widely-broadcast horrific scene aroused the consciousness of the world and calls for a new social paradigm that values human dignity. DuSable Heritage Association echoes this sentiment, consistent with its background deeply rooted in Change.

DHA prides itself on promoting Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable, a Change Agent whose transformative vision created a model of multiculturalism, where a Black man of Haitian descent and his Pottawatomi wife traded on equal footing with people from all races and ethnicities in his Chicago settlement. Another source of DHA’s heritage is the tenet of racial equality touted by the Haitian Revolution of 1804 which, along with a military victory, crushed the eugenic and racist theories espoused by the hegemonic powers of that time. This multi-faceted heritage gives DHA a special vintage point to advocate for meaningful Change.

For the last two decades, we have worked for the widespread recognition of Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable as Chicago’s first non-native settler by educating Chicagoans on our walking tours along the DuSable Founders Trail. Considering the recent events, it becomes even more urgent that DHA reinforce, on these tours, the notion of co-habitation and harmony among cultures and races that DuSable instituted in his settlement.

Additionally, last February, DHA inaugurated a lecture series in celebration of Black History Month. The series showcased DuSable’s achievements in early Chicago and the kinship and solidarity that marked the relations between Haitians and African Americans dating as far back as the early 19th Century. DHA plans to continue its celebration of Black History Month with a similar focus and a wide diversity of voices—including young ones.

Lastly, DHA will forcefully advocate for DuSable Park (The Park) to be a model for multiculturalism. We will work with our partners and see to it that The Park provides a cathartic experience, where those who venture in would come out “renewed” and cleansed from all prejudices and imbued with a deep sense of Respect for others. The Park must be a unique place, where harmony among different cultures is in full display, diversity exalted not denigrated, equality celebrated not trampled… the very way DuSable would have liked it today!

DHA calls upon all our friends and supporters, who have helped us carry the torch, to accompany us in this endeavor. For more on DHA’s work, please check our website: dusableheritage.org.