

## News Release

July 5, 2023



#DouglassWeek 2023 | Rochester, NY and online

## **Rochester chosen as location for third annual #DouglassWeek, celebrating the legacy of Frederick Douglass, July 10-16**

Today, July 5, is the anniversary of Douglass's famous speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" — which was delivered in Rochester

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Rochester will host the third annual #DouglassWeek, happening July 10-16 in celebration of the legacy and inspiration of famed and revered abolitionist, author, and orator Frederick Douglass. The inaugural #DouglassWeek celebration took place in Ireland in 2021 and last year in Washington, D.C. #DouglassWeek is a creative series of more than 40 in-person and virtual talks, performances, and events that celebrates the life and achievements of Frederick Douglass, the Douglass family, and other historical and present-day changemakers.

Douglass lived in Rochester for 25 of his most-active years, publishing *The North Star* newspaper here and buried by choice at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Douglass said, "I shall always feel more at home there (Rochester) than anywhere else in the country." Douglass escaped enslavement and rose up to become an advisor to three U.S. presidents, including Abraham Lincoln, and was the most photographed person of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

News of #DouglassWeek is being announced today, on what is the 171st anniversary of Douglass's famous speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" — a masterful and scathing indictment of slavery in America delivered on July 5, 1852, at Rochester's Corinthian Hall. Douglass had a decisive impact on America's path to abolishing slavery, and his work laid the foundation for the modern civil rights movement in the country

Rochester in-person activities include talks on the Underground Railroad, a 5K walk/run, a family-friendly community event, a commemoration at the Frederick Douglass gravesite, a photography walk ("Insta Walk") that celebrates visual storytelling, and the "Harmonies of Freedom" stage performance Saturday eve, celebrating the Douglass legacy at the Hochstein Performance Hall, featuring dancers and Broadway performers. **The list of events begins on page 3 of this news release and is online at [DouglassWeek.org](https://DouglassWeek.org).**

The co-organizers of #DouglassWeek are Dr. Caroline Dunham-Schroeter and Kristin M. Leary. Among their partners are the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives (FDFI), a nonprofit organization founded by Douglass descendants and headquartered in Rochester.

"We are delighted to be able to commemorate the life of Frederick Douglass and his efforts to abolish slavery and change the future for generations to come," said Dunham-Schroeter. "We believe it's vital to bring these stories to the locations where he had an impact during his lifetime and explore what the Douglass family stories mean to contemporary issues of identity, race,

independence and equal rights around the world.”

FDFI was co-founded by Kenneth B. Morris Jr., Douglass’s great-great-great-grandson. Morris and his mother, Nettie Washington Douglass, will be in attendance at events during #DouglassWeek in Rochester, a city he described “so important” to his family. “We hope many people can join us to commemorate my great-great-great grandfather and all he stood for and achieved throughout his life,” Morris said.

## **History of #DouglassWeek**

The annual weeklong celebration commemorates Frederick Douglass and others whose legacies continue to influence efforts to create a more just world. The week is organized by the U.S. nonprofit organization The Globe Lane Initiative, which is named for the lane housing the venue where Douglass first spoke in Cork, Ireland, in 1845. The group works with a network of Douglass scholars, historians, and researchers, along with artists, musicians, poets, community groups, and activists from around the world.

Participants in #DouglassWeek respond to the story of Douglass and other changemakers through historical, creative, academic, cultural and other lenses to describe the influence of history on contemporary topics and conversations. “By remembering and honoring our history and the Douglass legacy,” said co-organizer Leary, “we hope to influence and inspire transformative change today.”

The Ireland connection: Rochester is Sister City to Waterford, Ireland, where Douglass delivered a powerful speech on Oct. 8, 1845, when he was traveling throughout Ireland and Britain as part of a two-year speaking tour. He delivered speeches denouncing slavery and raised funds for the abolitionist cause in the United States. He had escaped enslavement just seven years earlier at the age of 20, and described his time in Ireland as “transformative” and key to the development of his political thinking. A plaque commemorating Douglass’ speech in Waterford was unveiled in 2013. During Douglass’s time in Britain, he befriended Anna, Henry, and Ellen Richardson, who ultimately raised the money to purchase his freedom in America.

Several collaborative projects commemorate Frederick Douglass’s journeys, notably the Cork Abolitionists Trail, a walking trail of sites where Douglass lived and spoke during his time in the city. It is part of the Globe Lane Initiative’s Journeys for Freedom project and generously supported by The Irish Government Emigrant Support Programme and Cork City Council.

#DouglassWeek 2023 further unites Ireland and the United States in celebrating Douglass and other changemakers, with partnering organizations in Washington, D.C. and Cork, Waterford, Wexford, and Belfast in Ireland. In March 2023, then-Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork Colm Kelleher visited Rochester and Washington, D.C. to expand the connections between Cork and the two cities, and #DouglassWeek 2023 will also highlight the special Sister City relationship between Rochester and Waterford.

Douglass returned home to America in 1847 and immediately moved his family to Rochester, where he raised his children with his wife, Anna Murray Douglass, and continued a remarkable career as a writer, orator, diplomat, journalist, advisor, suffragist, and champion for civil and human rights around the world.

# #DouglassWeek 2023 Events

Master schedule is at [DouglassWeek.org](https://DouglassWeek.org)

## Monday, July 10

### Virtual Events:

- 5 a.m.** (10 a.m. Ireland) **WELCOME TO DOUGLASS WEEK** (Virtual Live from Ireland)  
**6 a.m.** **DAGUERRETYPE ON MY HEART: AFRICAN AMERICAN VISUAL PERFORMANCE IN BRITAIN** (Video)  
**7 a.m.** **VISUALIZING BLACK ACTIVIST LECTURING TOURS** (Video)  
**12:30 p.m.** **FREDERICK DOUGLASS: ONE LIFE, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY** (Virtual Live from Washington, D.C.)  
**2 p.m.** **50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS PAPERS** (Virtual Live) <https://frederickdouglasspapersproject.com>  
**4 p.m.** **FREDERICK DOUGLASS'S VISIT TO IRELAND DURING THE FAMINE** (Video)

## Tuesday, July 11

### In-Person Rochester Events:

#### **11 a.m. UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STORY HOUR**

**Location:** RMSC, 657 East Ave., Rochester (included with museum admission)  
Join us at Kelsey's Landing rowboat inside RMSC for a Douglass-themed story hour as we read Frederick's Journey by Doreen Rappaport and explore other speeches and writings from members of the Douglass family.

#### **1 p.m. GUIDED TOUR OF *THE FLIGHT TO FREEDOM* EXHIBIT**

**Location:** RMSC, 657 East Ave., Rochester (included with museum admission)  
A guided tour of the RMSC exhibit. You'll explore primary source documents, heirlooms, and artifacts, and learn how this legendary family was instrumental in the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and the desegregation of the Rochester City School District.

#### **10 a.m. TEACHING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD: A CONVERSATION ON HISTORICAL EMPATHY**

**Location:** JoLi Event Center 384 East Ave., Rochester (free admission)  
Footsteps to Freedom Underground Railroad tour leader Hardy Brown will display and discuss more than 40 Underground Railroad artifacts that tell part of the rich history of the Underground Railroad. The talk will take place from 10 to 11 a.m. and attendees are welcome to also stay for a boxed lunch and presentations from Douglass descendant Kenneth B. Morris, Jr., a performance by Akwaaba, and interaction with Footsteps to Freedom educators, as they celebrate the end of their week-long trip following stops along the Underground Railroad.

### Virtual Live Event:

- Noon** **ROCHESTERIANS AND CEDAR HILL: EDUCATORS, JOURNALISTS AND ACTIVISTS VISIT FREDERICK DOUGLASS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

## Wednesday, July 12

### **In-Person Rochester Events:**

- 10 a.m.** #DOUGLASSWEEK PRESS CONFERENCE (Location to be announced)
- 11 a.m.** **RMSC: UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STORY HOUR**  
(incl. with RMSC admission)
- 1 p.m.** **RMSC: GUIDED TOUR OF *THE FLIGHT TO FREEDOM* EXHIBIT**  
(incl. with RMSC admission)
- 6 p.m.** **COMMUNITY FUN RUN & WALK**  
Location: Through the Park Ave. neighborhood/Starts at Culver Road Armory  
*Advance registration required. Register at FleetFeetRochester.com*  
Lace up your shoes and join us for a 5K Fun Run/Walk that takes us by Douglass family sites around the Park Avenue neighborhood, including the colorful markers at his former home on Alexander Street. Participants will meet at Fleet Feet at Culver Road Armory, 55 Culver Road, Rochester, and the run/walk will end with cake and conversation back at the store. No need for speed ... you can take part in this event at your own pace.

### **Virtual Events:**

- Noon** **EMPOWERING EDUCATION & INSPIRING CHANGE: THE 5TH EDITION FREDERICK DOUGLASS IRELAND CURRICULUM EVENT** (Virtual Live)
- Noon** **THE LOST HISTORY OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS & THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER** (Video)
- 6 p.m.** **SCREENING of “ABRAHAM LINCOLN & FREDERICK DOUGLASS, A WALK TO RESPECT”** (Virtual Live)  
A screening of a one-act play by Beth Duda with poetry by Cedric Hameed about the relationship between these two giants of American history, as presented at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in February 2023. The screening will be followed by a live, virtual panel discussion with the actors, playwright, and production team.

## Thursday, July 13

### **In-Person Rochester Events:**

- 11 a.m.** **UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STORY HOUR**  
RMSC/(include with museum admission)
- 11:30 a.m.** **Douglass Dialogues: Family Connections**  
**Location:** Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives, 140 East Main St., Rochester  
Douglass descendants Nettie Washington Douglass and Kenneth B. Morris, Jr. will talk with with Kathy Carr, descendant of Elizabeth and Neal Hardy, who saved Frederick Douglass’s life after a a mob attack in Indianapolis in 1843.
- 1 p.m.** **RMSC: GUIDED TOUR OF *THE FLIGHT TO FREEDOM* EXHIBIT**  
RMSC (included with museum admission)

6 p.m.

**INK ON THE PAGE: MAKING OUR MARK  
IN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SPACES**

*Presented by the University of Rochester Graduate Students of Color*

**Location:** Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives, 140 East Main St, Rochester  
The life of a graduate student is overloaded with lab work, coursework, research, meetings, and events. However, these tasks can get even more complicated when considering one's identities in academic politics, such as race and gender. In the spirit of Frederick Douglass, four Ph.D. students at the University of Rochester — Micah Williams, Tashjaé Scales, Yash Chitrakar, and Nashae Prout — will lead a conversation about ways students of color survive/thrive/provide/reside/deny the spaces that historically have intended to erase their narratives from the world.

**Virtual Event:**

11 a.m.

**THE DISAPPEARING OF DOUGLASS:  
FRANK YERBY AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS** (Virtual Live)

**Friday, July 14**

**In-Person Rochester Events:**

6 p.m.

**FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND PAN-AFRICANISM**

**Location:** Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives, 140 East Main St., Rochester  
Explore how the ideas and deeds of Frederick Douglass were remembered in the Pan-African Movement with Dr. Jesse Olsavsky (Duke Kunshan University). Because Douglass opposed the expatriation of African Americans “back to Africa,” it is often presumed that Douglass had no interest in Africa and had minimal criticism of colonialism. However, this was not the case. Learn the facts regarding his thinking and influence.

**Virtual Events:**

9 a.m.

**FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE** (Video)

10 a.m.

**ANTI-SLAVERY BELFAST TOUR** (Video)

**Saturday, July 15**

**In-Person Rochester Events:**

10 a.m. to 1p.m.

**Family Day Community Event**

**Locations:** Frederick Douglass Community Library, 971 South Ave. and Anna Murray-Douglass Academy, 999 South Ave., Rochester  
Three hours of family-friendly activities, including storytelling, historical reenactors, activity stations, opportunities to meet members of the Douglass family, and art installation by Rochester artist LaShonda Davis of a multi-panel portrait of Frederick Douglass.

7:30 p.m.

**HARMONIES OF FREEDOM: HONORING THE DOUGLASS  
FAMILY LEGACY THROUGH MUSIC**

**Location:** Hochstein School of Music, 50 N. Plymouth Ave., Rochester  
An evening of performances featuring Broadway stars Paul Oakley Stovall (Hamilton), Nikhil Saboo (Mean Girls, Dear Evan Hansen), and Yassmin Alers

(Rent, Get on Your Feet), who will perform original songs exploring Frederick Douglass's travels in Ireland and songs from the musical "American Prophet." Also onstage: Dance performances by Dunwoody Dance and PJ Pennewell of Garth Fagan Dance; dramatic readings of Douglass's words; and chamber music. Tickets are \$33.85 for adults and \$17.35 for students at [DouglassWeek.org](http://DouglassWeek.org).

### **Virtual Events:**

**10 a.m.**      **THE EXCEPTION IS NOT THE RULE** (Virtual Live) Time  
**Time TBD**      **"WHAT TO THE SLAVE IS THE 4TH OF JULY?"** (Virtual Live)  
Historian Cecilia Hartsell will examine the speech and how the messages resonate today.

### **Sunday, July 16**

#### **In-Person Rochester Events:**

**11 a.m.**      **REMEMBRANCE AND REFLECTION  
AT DOUGLASS FAMILY GRAVESITE**  
**Location:** Mt. Hope Cemetery  
Join members of the Douglass family, local singers, and dignitaries at the Douglass family gravesite for remarks, readings, and song as an uplifting close to #DouglassWeek.

**Noon**      **MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY TOUR**  
**Location:** Mt. Hope Cemetery  
Join our partners from the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery for a guided tour, including the Douglass family gravesite and those of other abolitionists within walking distance .

**3:30 p.m.**      **INSTA WALK AND PHOTO COMPETITION**  
**LOCATION:** Starting point TBD  
Commemorate Douglass's enduring influence and honor the power of visual storytelling by capping off #DouglassWeek with an inspiring photo in Rochester, led by local photographer Quajay Donnell. During the walk, participants will have the opportunity to capture artistic photographs that inspire them along the route or evoke the spirit of Frederick Douglass. Participants are encouraged to post their photos online using the #DouglassWeek2023 hashtag.

### **Virtual Events:**

**9:30 a.m.**      **BARRETSTOWN IN KILDARE ONLINE WORKSHOP** (Virtual Live)  
**2 p.m.**      **WILD ONES SALON** (Virtual Live)  
**5 p.m.**      **CLOSING EVENT** (Virtual Live)

### **More information:** [www.douglassweek.org](http://www.douglassweek.org)

Twitter:      @DouglassWeek23      Instagram:      @DouglassWeek  
Facebook:      #DouglassWeek      YouTube:      #DouglassWeek

### **Attention Media**

High-res images are online at <https://tinyurl.com/DouglassWeek2023>

#### **Rochester media contact**

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