



Join the National Park Service at the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park on July 13. The memorial will be rededicated in a ceremony hosted by the National Park Service, with support from the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and Bethune-Cookman University.

Special guests include the Honorable Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, D.C., and Dr. A. Lois Keith, National Chair of the Board, NCNW.

Event Highlights:

The event will include a formal rededication ceremony from 3:30 – 4:45 p.m. followed by music and informal activities starting at 5 p.m. The ceremony will mirror the original 1974 program, including speeches by leaders of the National Park Service and NCNW, reading of Mrs. Bethune’s Last Will and Testament by students from the Washington School for Girls, performances by the “President’s Own” Marine Band and the Bethune-Cookman University Choir, and a grand unveiling and rededication of the memorial.

At 5 p.m., DC Strings will kick-off the evening performances on stage. At 6 p.m. actor Leslie Jones will portray Mrs. Bethune highlighting key moments in Mrs. Bethune’s life and selections from her most famous speeches. In keeping with the 1970s flavor of the dedication, “The Tribe Band” will perform R&B and funk music.

In addition to the evening performances, there will be ranger tours, organizations tabling, hands-on activities, food trucks and an area called “Legacy Lane” where visitors can learn more about Mary McLeod Bethune, the National Council of Negro Women, Bethune’s statue and the historic 1974 memorial unveiling event in Lincoln Park. The event will also feature a special commemorative NPS “Passport to Your National Parks” stamp and a Bethune Birthday Junior Ranger Badge.

Getting There:

There is limited parking around Lincoln Park. There will be free event parking at St. Coletta's School, located at 1901 Independence Avenue SE. Visitors can take free event shuttle buses, including an accessible bus, to the park. There will also be a drop-off zone on the East Capitol Street SE, adjacent to Lincoln Park.

Visitors can also take Metro to the Stadium-Armory Metro Station on Metro's blue, orange and silver lines. Exit from the station's south entrance between C Street and Burke Street SE. There will be a free event shuttle stop on the corner of 19th & Burke streets adjacent to St. Coletta's school to take visitors to the event. The walk from the metro to Lincoln Park is about eight blocks.

Media Attendance:

Media representatives are invited to attend and cover this landmark anniversary. Please RSVP by July 12. For additional information or to schedule interviews, please contact: [e-mail us](#).

About Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park:

The National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) led the fundraising effort and dedication ceremony of this memorial to their founder, Mary McLeod Bethune, in 1974. This was the first statue of an African American leader and the first of an American woman in the nation's capital. Approximately 18,000 people attended the unveiling. Civil Rights leader and NCNW President Dorothy Height presided over the ceremony. Dignitaries at the original event included Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Congressman Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King and actor Cicely Tyson. Robert Berks, renowned for his bust of John F. Kennedy at the Kennedy Center, sculpted the statue.

Mary McLeod Bethune was a foremost leader of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1930s – 1955. She founded the National Council of Negro Women and Bethune-Cookman University. An advisor to four U.S. presidents, she was responsible for the creation of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet," attended the first meeting of the United Nations and helped establish the Tuskegee Airmen.