NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 10024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

259

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name (Old) Douglass High School

other names/site number Page Woodson School; F.D. Moon Middle School; Lowell School

2. Location

street & number 600 North High Avenue **[N/A] not for publication**

city or town Oklahoma City **[N/A] vicinity**

state Oklahoma code OK county Oklahoma code 109 zip code 73117

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide x locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — State Historic Preservation Officer — Date 2.20.07

Oklahoma Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☑ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ other, explain
☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action 4.4.07

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

[ ] private
[X] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

[X] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[ ] structure
[ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof CONCRETE/ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[ ] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

[ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] **B** removed from its original location.

[ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.

[ ] **D** a cemetery.

[ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] **F** a commemorative property.

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
ETHNIC HISTORY – African American

Periods of Significance
1933-1955

Significant Dates
1934
1943

Significant Person(s)
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Layton, Smith & Hawk, architects
Layton, Hicks, & Forsyth, architects
Sorey, Hill, Sorey, architects

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

#_____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#_____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State Agency
☐ Federal Agency
☐ Local Government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository:
Oklahoma Historical Society/SHPO

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx 3

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1.	14	636650	3926600
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
3.			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4.			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
All of Block 9, Park Place Addition

Boundary Justification
This is the property historically associated with Douglass School

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudette Robertson, President (edited by Jim Gabbert, architectural historian, OK/SHPO)
organization Claudette Robertson Consultants date 6/19/2006
street & number 7528 NW 113th Street telephone (405) 773-1384
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73162

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Independent School District 89
street & number 900 N. Klein Avenue telephone
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73106

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

DESCRIPTION

Douglass High School is an example of Classical Revival style, red brick school building located in northeast Oklahoma City. The original building was constructed in 1910 and was called Lowell School. Designed by the architectural firm of Layton, Smith & Hawk, this original building was two stories in height on a raised basement and had a rectangular footprint. Subsequent additions were constructed in 1919, 1934 and 1948, matching materials and style. Layton, Smith & Hawk were the architects of the 1919 addition, while Layton Hicks & Forsyth did the 1934 addition. A swimming pool addition was constructed on the northeast side in 1948; the architects for that project were Sorey, Hill, Sorey. The new additions, on the north and south sides of the original building, change the layout to a lazy U. Sitting on a knoll on the edge of the Oak Park Addition, just east of Kelly Avenue between Northeast 5th and Northeast 6th, the school now overlooks many vacant lots to the north, west, and south. This was once a dense residential area, but only the neighborhood to the west remains somewhat intact. To the northwest is the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, a sprawling hospital complex located north of Northeast 8th Street. The lot has a concrete retaining wall that separates the sidewalk from the raised lawn of the school.

Although closed in 1993 and vacant since that time, the school building retains a high degree of architectural integrity. During the course of its use, all of the original windows were exchanged for more modern aluminum sashes. Other minor alterations and improvements were made as the building's use evolved. The 1919 addition to the building was made prior to its reclassification as a Separate school and was present during the period of significance. The 1934 addition was part of the building's transformation from an all white elementary school to the city's only Black high school.

Douglass High School was constructed in four sections using the Classical Revival vocabulary that was prevalent in school construction at the time and that was a trademark of the work of Solomon Layton and his firm. Layton's original 1910 building was a three story, west-facing, red brick school with a rectangular footprint. Cast stone ornament utilized classical motifs. In 1919, a matching addition was added to the north end of the building. The 1910 and 1919 sections are identified as having a reinforced concrete frame. The conversion of the building from an elementary school to a full service high school necessitated the addition of new classroom space as well as an auditorium and gymnasium. In 1933 the firm of Layton, Hicks & Forsyth completed the plans and construction began in 1934. These additions were placed perpendicular to the main axis of the earlier building, at both the north and south sides, and extending to the east. This gave the completed building a U-shaped footprint, with the open end facing east. The northern section had classrooms on its western half and a gymnasium and pool on its eastern half. The second 1934 addition, a theater auditorium, approximately 60 by 100 feet, was added to the south end of the original structure with another section, approximately 40 by 40 feet, added to the southwest corner. This smaller section was square in shape with a corner that jutted out, giving it the appearance of a corner tower, and included a balcony. The roof on the new addition was built with steel trusses and had concrete walls with reinforced iron. The interior walls were plastered and the 58 foot wide stage spanned the

east end of the auditorium. This section was built with fireproof materials, concrete floors, and a concrete roof with brick walls. In 1948, a final addition was made at the northwest corner. A swimming pool, in a single story brick structure, was added to the east wall of the gymnasium. Sorey Hill Sorey was the architectural firm for this project. The addition matches in materials, but lacks any stylistic embellishment.

Douglass has six double door entrances; two on the north side, two on the west side, one on the east side and one on the south side. The primary entrances were on the west side of the building. Originally, two matching entrances were built on the east side of the building. At some time, one of these entrances was discontinued, changed into a window and the staircase leading to the entrance was removed. The main entrance was later focused to the south side of the building, at the southwest corner.

West Elevation:
The west side approach to Douglass High School is the most commonly used approach since this route exits from two heavily used streets, Northeast 4th Street and North Kelley Avenue. The west side approach offers a wide view of the building from a distance and is the formal architectural facade. The red brick Douglass High School has a strong horizontal design emphasized by the use of a cast stone belt course that serves as the lintel for the ranks of upper floor windows and a matching belt at the sill level of the main floor windows. Cast stone spandrels connect the main and upper floor window sets.

At the northwest end of the building a 1934 addition extends out several feet from the main section. On each corner of this addition is a brick pilaster rising from the second story floor level to the top of the third story window level. The tops of these brick pilasters are capped with capitals that continue from the belt course. The stretcher bonding on this section has an interesting pyramid design along the edge of the belt course at the bottom of the pilaster. These pyramids are intersected in the center with a vertical stretcher design rising to a point that is level with the top of the brick pilasters. In the center of this vertical stretcher bonding is another stretcher course of soldier bond of a vertical design.

Originally, there were three large 4/4 hung windows with masonry sills at the end of the hallway on each floor of the northwest corner. These have been replaced with 1/1 anodized aluminum windows. All other windows were once 9/6, tall single hung windows, except the basement level which had 6/6. All have been replace by triple sash, single pane units of anodized aluminum, except the basement level, which has 1/1. The windows have heavy cast stone sills and each upper floor window is separated by a decorative scrolled bracket attached to the top of a plain masonry pilaster extending from the sill of the main floor windows to the top of the upper floor windows. In the spandrel of the between the main and upper floor is a bas-relief plain circular medallion bordered by vertical acanthus leaf scrolls. All of the decorative elements surrounding the windows remain as they were originally designed.

On the west side of the building a concrete staircase leads from the street level sidewalk to a small open plaza near the center of the building. From the north and south sides of this plaza,

exterior stairways each lead to an entrance. Each stairway is flanked by a brick wall with a cast stone banister. Each entrance has wooden double doors with a window on the upper half of each door. Each of the entrance doorways is capped by a 1/1 window with a wide cast stone surround and a low, pedimented cap. Below the sill, in the spandrel between door and window, is a bracketed entablature of cast stone supported by brick corbels. Under the spandrel is an architrave with a small decorative frieze in the center. On one side of the frieze is the number "19" and on the other side is the number "10" indicating the year this section was built, "1910." A brick parapet projects above the roofline above each of these two entryways. Between the two entryways are a ranks of twelve windows. These windows are separated by masonry pilasters with bas-relief capitals. These capitals are bas-relief masks expressing the three emotions of fear, joy, and anger. To the north of the northernmost entry are a rank of four windows on each floor and there are five to the south of the southernmost entry. These have stylized acanthus leaf capitals on their pilasters.

On the southwest corner brick wall there were originally, three 12/6 hung windows. These have now been replaced with triple sash windows. Each window has a masonry sill. The basement level windows have no lintels and the sills rest atop the watertable/foundation.

South Elevation:
In 1910 Page Woodson was originally designed as a single unit, rectangular ground plan. As sections were added in 1919 and 1934, the ground plan evolved into a side facing "U." The north and south ends represent the additions that were made in 1934 with each addition jutting east from the corner of the building forming the top and bottom arms of the "U" shape. The gymnasium section on the north side is larger than the theater addition on the south side of the building.

As one turns left onto North Kelley Avenue from Northeast 4th Street the southwest corner of the 1934 addition is visible behind a few scrub trees set on the hill to the east. At the southwest corner, there are single window openings on each floor. The upper floor opening is thinner than the main floor. To the right begins a rank of four windows on each floor, style identically to those on the west elevation. The wall surface juts out at an entryway. The south entrance, reached by a wide flight of steps, opens to a small public parking lot.

The south side entrance is a large entry area and extends out away from the building approximately ten feet. The entryway's flat roof is actually a balcony which is accessible through three windows above the balcony. The windows are separated by fluted masonry pilasters that extend a few feet above the height of the window. The top of the pilasters end in a leaf patterned scroll. From the front of this entryway a concrete stairway bordered by a brick and cast stone banister leads to a recessed double wooden door flanked by wide sidelights. At the front of the recessed area are pilasters which end in a cast stone scroll frieze next to the parapet of the balcony. Centered between the friezes on the pilasters is a spandrel with floral and garland decor along the sides and at the top. Centered in this spandrel is the school name, "Page Woodson School." (The name of the school has changed several times since the new Douglass High School was built on 9th and Eastern [now Martin Luther king Avenue] in 1953. In 1975 the name was changed to Page Woodson School.)

On the right side of this entrance the building extends eastward. As on the west side of the building, this section also has single sash windows at the ground level. This section of the 1934 addition is the theater and does not have an upper floor. Four quadruple sash windows stretch from the second floor elevation through to the third floor elevation. These windows have a simple masonry sill. They are flanked by a narrow cast stone surround reaching up to a decorative floral and garland lintel.

Just beyond the last window on this southeast side the roof line changes. It now extends approximately ten feet higher than the previous roofline. This corresponds to the backstage area of the theater, the flyspace that accommodates the scenery changing mechanical system. A standard size exterior door with no ornamentation is located close to the southeast side of the building and was used as an emergency exit.

East Elevation:
Architectural sketches indicate the east side of the school was originally intended to serve as the front of the building when it was first built in 1910. The two identical main entrance stairways lead straight to the courtyard rather than angling north and south and conjoining at a portico, as in the west side entrances. The southeast exterior stairway and double entry doors were removed, the opening sealed and replaced with 1/1 hung windows, and the stairs removed at an unknown date.

The bracketed cornice with decorative spandrel identical to the west side entry decor remains above the area where the door and stairway once were located. The east side also has a series of triple sash windows with the same wide lintels and decorative ornamental pilasters, spandrels between each window as were described on the west side of the building. On the northeast side is a standard single exterior door that opens out to a courtyard. Today, a six-foot cyclone fence and the courtyard indicate this area was most used for outdoor physical activities and for the dismissing and returning of students to the classroom after the conversion back into an elementary school.

North Elevation:
The north side of the building has a more utilitarian appearance. The wall is stepped from west to east with four planes, with a single story addition at the east end. The westernmost is the most recessed; the easternmost has the largest area and conforms to the location of the gymnasium, and the single story addition houses the pool. The westernmost wall has a set of five windows on each floor, styled like those on the other elevations. On the second wall plane, stepped out approximately four feet, a low set of broad stairs leads to a simple wooden double door at an entrance closely resembling entrances from the south side of the building. Over the door is the name of the school, "PAGE WOODSON SCHOOL" painted in a strip of cast stone with bas-relief stylized acanthus leafs flanking. The third plane is stepped out approximately six feet and has a rank of five windows, similarly decorated to the balance of the building. The last plane projects out about five feet. Approximately half way across the north end of the building is a single standard exterior door. This door is set low against the brick wall, leading to the lower level of the building, possibly to the boiler room. It has a metal porch roof supported

by metal poles at each end. A double door used for deliveries and services is located at the northeast corner of the building. The single story addition has no windows and its brick wall is topped with a cast stone capstone. On the north side, the upper floor windows are triple sash with a brick pilaster separating each group of three windows. At the top of the pilaster is a capital with an acanthus leaf, bas-relief ornament. The masonry belt course lintel continues on this side of the building at the second floor level. A single triple sash window located above a stairwell is set in the wall at this level on the northeast end. The windows are placed high near the roof.

SIGNIFICANCE

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building being nominated, Old Douglass High School, was built in 1910 as Lowell Elementary School for white students. Due to population changes, the school facility was expanded and converted into the Separate High School for Oklahoma City in 1933 and it served in this capacity, renamed Douglass High School, until 1956 when a new school building was opened. Douglass High School is a Classic Revival design crafted by the well-known architectural firm of Layton, Smith, and Hawk. Solomon Layton's firm was the primary architect for many of the schools in Oklahoma City during the early 1900s.[1] Douglass High School is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because of its unique status and association with events that have made a significant contribution to the development of African American education and racial equality in the history of Oklahoma City.

From 1933 to 1955, Douglass High School was the place where African American students, educators, and residents in Oklahoma City could actually consider their "home school" with pride. Douglass High School was the first facility to be used as a centralized location for the development and advancement of African American education exclusively for the upper grade students, as well as a central gathering place for the African American community in Oklahoma City. The name, Douglass School, has followed the school's relocation process from a wood frame building in 1891 at Harvey and California to its 2006 location at Northeast 10th Street and Martin Luther King Avenue in Oklahoma City. Over the years, every other facility known as 'Douglass' was lost through fire or demolition and, currently, the 1954 Douglass High School on Northeast Ninth Street and Martin Luther King Avenue is scheduled for demolition. (Old) Douglass High School (Page Woodson) soon will be one of the few remaining facilities that serve as a historic link to the development of early African American education and social progress in Oklahoma City. The most important school in the Separate School system of the city, (Old) Douglass High School represents not just the period of *de jure* segregation in Oklahoma City, but also it represents the community's efforts to overcome the inherent inequality of the system.

Overview – Oklahoma City History

Indian Territory was created in the early 19th Century as the place for the U.S. government to "relocate" members of the Native American tribes of the eastern United States. During the Civil War, most of the tribes in Indian Territory supported the Confederacy; as a result, the U.S. government took away their lands in the sparsely populated west and central part of the Territory. Most of the western areas were used to relocate Plains tribes, but the middle remained "Unassigned Lands," where only soldiers and a few people essential for transport were allowed to live, without owning land. In the late 1880s and the 1890s, the U.S. government responded to pressures to expand available farmland, and permitted non-Natives

[1] Nelson, Mary Jo. The Buildings of Solomon Andrew Layton Oklahoma City: Historic Conservation Programs, Oklahoma Historical Society. P.1

to establish towns and farms in Indian Territory. The first such large "opening" to settlement was the Land Run in the spring of 1889:

> "A common description of western towns is that they 'sprang up overnight.' In the case of Oklahoma City, the literal truth is that it came into being between noon and sunset of April 22, 1889 ... ten thousand settlers ... camped by nightfall over the wide expanse east and west of the Santa Fe's single-track [railroad] boxcar station, where land had been set aside for a townsite."[2]

When the census was taken in 1890, the new city had 4151 residents in the townsite on the west side of the Santa Fe railroad tracks. Others staked out quarter-section (160-acre) farm parcels, which in later years would be sold for subdivisions.

During the 1890s, Oklahoma City grew primarily within the original townsite and initially to the northeast.[3] The first addition east of the Santa Fe Railroad was Maywood, which was platted in 1892, followed in 1894 by Military Addition, replacing the military outpost just across the tracks east of town. (The southern part of Military Addition is now known as Bricktown.) Two more rail lines were built in the 1890s: the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific (Rock Island) in 1895, and the St. Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) Railroad in 1898. This expansion led, in turn, to more economic development. By the turn of the century, Oklahoma City was booming with several industries, including two cotton gins, a flour mill, and an ice factory, in addition to the three railroads.[4] The 1900 census counted 10,037 people; in 1910, 64,205. The railroads made the young city a hub of regional commerce.

As new businesses and industries moved into the downtown area, the city necessarily expanded. The direction of residential growth away from the city center was primarily to the northwest. "In 1902, John Shartel and Anton H. Classen began the construction of the street railway system, which allowed further growth to the north ... The residential sections responded by shifting into the areas that were served by the lines ... this period began the noticeable shift in single family dwelling residential areas away from the original townsite. ..."[5] Streetcar lines were built in Oklahoma City from 1903 to the early 1920s. The location of the lines encouraged future homeowners to buy adjacent land, which was primarily owned by the streetcar developers and operators. Local lines fanned out from downtown as far as Northwest 36th and Classen, Northwest 19th east of Portland, Stockyards, and Capitol Hill; interurban lines were built to Guthrie, Norman, and El Reno.

Statehood was approved in 1907, combining Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory. But the capitol was in Guthrie, which had been the seat of Oklahoma Territory government; a

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[2] Workers of the Writers Program of the Works Project Administration. Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941) p. 182-183.

[3] Howard Meredith and George Shirk. "Oklahoma City: Growth and Reconstruction, 1889-1930," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 55 (Fall 1977), p. 21.

[4] Janetta Isabel Mahar. "Social Changes in Oklahoma City from 1889 to 1930" (M.A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1933), p. 21.

[5] Ibid. p. 298.

campaign to move the capitol to Oklahoma City was successful in a 1912 election. The stockyards and meat packing plants came to the south side in 1910; that was the largest employment center, with 2000 workers. The 1920 population was 91,295.

This rate of growth continued during the 1920s. Petroleum exploration allowed the state's economy to diversify, greatly benefiting Oklahoma City. "Manufacturing became less bound up with agriculture and expanded into new fields, and in the late 1920s, a gusher oil field was developed on the east side, within the city limits. As Oklahoma City grew industrially, it added new iron and steel plants, factories for making furniture, clothing, and electrical equipment. Various large utility companies, brokerage houses, and commission concerns also established their headquarters downtown."[6] Population grew "... by over one-hundred percent in ten years," and the value of building permits issued "... increased ... from about five million dollars in 1920 to eight million dollars in 1924."[7]

African-Americans in Oklahoma City

African-Americans have played a significant role in the history of Oklahoma City since before statehood. After first coming to Oklahoma with displaced Native Americans (most but not all as slaves), they obtained freedom and land following the Civil War. From 1889, a sense of opportunity and equality prevailed when African-Americans as well as whites claimed land in the newly opened Oklahoma Territory, laying the foundation for a rapidly growing Oklahoma City. Soon, however, racial discrimination took hold and the African-American was economically, socially and legally segregated from the majority white population. Within these segregated communities, however, a distinct cultural, political, and economic landscape flourished, leaving a physical record of African-American contributions to the development of Oklahoma City.

In the 1830s and 1840s the Unassigned Lands of Indian Territory became home to thousands of displaced Indians and the black slaves (and free blacks) they brought with them on their treacherous westward journey. An 1860 census estimated the number of blacks in Indian Territory to have numbered 7,369.[8] Although the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 granted freedom to the slaves in the United States, members of the Five Tribes who sided with the Confederacy ignored the decree. It was not until after the Civil War that African-American slaves in Indian Territory received freedom and land allotments as a result of the national government's treaties with the tribes. By government mandate, the new "freedmen" in Indian Territory would receive allotments of land and in some cases be adopted into the tribes who formerly owned them. Most received forty to one hundred and sixty acres.

In the Land Run of 1889, more than 200 African-Americans raced alongside white settlers[9] for

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[6] Works Project Administration, p. 182-183.

[7] Susan Allen and Cynthia Smelker. Intensive Level Survey of Central Park, Jefferson Park, and Paseo Neighborhoods in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1994), p. 20.

[8] Jimmie Lewis Franklin. Journey Toward Hope. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982.

[9] Dianna Everett. "Edwards, Walter J. and Frances W., House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination. 1994.

the chance to make a new start. The early territorial days were marked by a sense of racial equality, with African-Americans holding positions in the Oklahoma Territory Legislature and other territorial offices. Although in Oklahoma City the African-American population was fairly dispersed throughout the community,[10] territorial policy did call for separate educational facilities, and in 1891 Oklahoma City opened its first black school. By 1905 black commercial activity in Oklahoma City began to prosper and the promise of opportunity seemed to hold true. Some African-American leaders felt that Oklahoma was the "promised land" for African-Americans and envisioned it as a future all-black state. This hope came to an abrupt end with the 1906 Constitutional Convention led by "Alfalfa Bill" Murray that included Jim Crow laws to segregate transportation, schools and to prohibit interracial marriage. With statehood in 1907, Oklahoma was officially transformed into a segregationist society.

The history of Oklahoma City African-Americans is closely tied to the northeast area of the city. Early black neighborhoods were located south of Northeast 4th, just east of downtown Oklahoma City and south of one of Oklahoma City's early prestigious neighborhoods, the Maywood Addition. A commercial area developed on Northeast 2nd, three blocks east of downtown, and the surrounding residential area was filled with folk housing, as well as substantial brick homes and Prairie School residences.

While there were no territorial laws establishing housing segregation, racial separation occurred as a result of economics and custom. Public schools were the first institution to be officially segregated; in 1897 the territorial legislature used the "separate but equal" doctrine of the 1896 United States Supreme Court decision in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson to mandate racial separation of schools, juries and public facilities.[11] Negro schools were located in the predominantly black residential areas.

Segregation continued in the form of restrictive covenants on plats and through agreements among white property owners and real estate operators.[12] Such deed restrictions were established with the prevailing belief that a racially restricted neighborhood was necessary to maintain property values. "Persons of African descent, known as Negro," were prohibited by plat restrictions from buying property in many additions; however, "there shall be no provision prohibiting the keeping of colored servants."[13]

In the first ten years from statehood in 1907, the state government set up "Jim Crow" laws, establishing segregation in most areas of public life and effectively prohibiting blacks from voting. While there were occasional gains in efforts against legalized segregation, generally in the courts, in most cases the governor and legislature would rewrite and reestablish any stricken provisions. In this environment the segregated black neighborhoods became well established.[14]

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[10] Edward J. Pugh. Spatial Consequences of Public Policy on the Evolution of the Black Community; a Case Study of Oklahoma City, 1889-1974. Unpublished thesis, University of Oklahoma: Norman, 1977.

[11] Arrell Morgan Gibson. Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 176.

[12] Pugh. Spatial Consequences, 1977.

[13] Oklahoma County Deed Records. Examples include Gatewood (1922) and Crown Heights (1930).

[14] Reconnaissance Survey of Northeast, Northwest, and South Oklahoma City.

By 1910, African-Americans in Oklahoma City numbered over 6,700, accounting for approximately ten percent of the city's population.[15] That percentage declined slowly as the total population grew rapidly; the African-American population in 1920 was 8241 of 91,295; in 1930, 14,662 of 185,389; in 1940, 19,344 of 204,424.[16]

By 1930 the black population occupied most of the housing south of Northeast 8th, and the population was continuing to grow. Property owners north of the area were concerned that their neighborhoods would be "invaded" by blacks. The Oklahoma City Planning Commission surveyed several cities concerning the applications and legality of establishing race-based zoning. Following this survey, Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray recommended two boundaries in 1933. One boundary, which was drawn at approximately Northeast 8th, marked the northern boundary which was to be exclusively black. The second boundary, which was drawn at approximately Northeast 10th, identified the southern line of exclusively white housing. In between, the "75 per cent rule" was to apply: No person of one race could move to any block that was occupied by 75 per cent or more of persons of the other race. The city ordinance of 1934 codified the limit as 51 per cent, set a fine of $19 per day per violation, and stated that "... there have been angry disturbances and disagreements and ill-feelings and controversies and threats against the lives and property of the citizens ..."[17] However, these zoning changes were challenged in court and found to be unconstitutional.

Establishment of civil rights for blacks in Oklahoma City came slowly, largely the result of court cases. Voting was restored in the 1930s. The ability to attend the University of Oklahoma law school and other graduate schools was established in the late 1940s and 1950s. Beginning in 1958, black youths sat in whites-only downtown Oklahoma City lunch counters; the beginning of a relatively peaceful integration process. School integration began in the early 1960s, years after the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled against school segregation in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954.

Separate Schools

In 1890 Congress passed the Organic Act which officially established a territorial government and, immediately, President Harrison appointed Colonel George W. Steele to be the first governor. By the end of the territorial government's first session, Governor Steele had signed legislation that would establish higher education and public schools with an appropriation of $50,000 for the temporary support of elementary and high schools in Oklahoma Territory.

By 1891, four hundred school districts statewide were in operation, with 9,893 out of 21,357 children enrolled. Funding for these schools was provided by direct taxes and by the payment of fines into the school fund.[18] On January 5, 1891, the Oklahoma school board met to establish the Oklahoma City Public Schools, including a "Colored School" for African American

[15] Pugh. Spatial Consequences, 1977.
[16] City Planning Commission. The Comprehensive City Plan, Oklahoma City, 1949.
[17] Vertical files, City of Oklahoma City.
[18] Blackburn

children.[19] Jefferson Davis Randolph was appointed to serve as principal and Lewis S. Wilson was his assistant. One month later, the doors of the "The Colored School" opened with eighteen students in a two room wooden building adjoining a stable on Harvey and Reno in Oklahoma City.[20] As the student population grew the building became too small and from 1892 through 1903, the school was moved several times. [21]

Statehood brought codification of the practice of separate schools. A contentious issue in many parts of the state, the separation of the races in public facilities, including transportation and schools, was among the first issues addressed by the Constitutional Convention and the first state legislature. The School Laws of Oklahoma that provides for the separation of the two races reads:

> Section 280. The public schools of the State of Oklahoma shall be organized and maintained upon a complete plan of separation between the white and colored races, with impartial facilities for both races.
>
> Section 281. The term "Colored" as used in the preceding section shall be construed to mean all persons of African descent, who possess any quantum of Negro blood, and the term "white" shall include all other persons. The term "public school" within the meaning of this article, shall include all schools provided for or maintained, in whole or part, at public expense.
>
> Section 282. The county separate school in each district is hereby declared to be that school in said school district having the fewest number of children in said school district: Provided, that the county superintendent of public instruction of each county shall have the authority to designate what school or schools in each school district shall be the separate school and which class of children – either white or colored – shall have the privilege of attending such separate school or schools in said school district. members of the district board shall be of the same race as the children who are entitled to attend the school of the district, not the separate school.[22]

Funding for the separate dependent and independent schools was handled differently than for the regular district schools. Districts could levy up to 15 mills on property within their districts to support and maintain schools. Districts could also issue bonds for construction. Separate schools were supported through a county-wide levy of no more than two mills. "Those (counties) having large Negro population and many separate schools cannot, from the limited levy, provide adequate buildings, necessary equipment, essential instructional supplies,

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[19] Hawkins, Henry. Compiler. "Celebrating 100 years of Excellence 1891-1991" Centennial Publication. Diamond Printing & Publishing. 1991.

[20] Hawkins. P.10

[21] Hawkins. P.10

[22] *Report of a Survey of Public Education in Oklahoma*, US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Washington, DC, 1922. Page 331.

reasonable salaries for teachers, and acceptable months of school terms."[23] A federal report from 1922 points out the inequities of this situation:

> The separate school law is unjust to both races, and cannot be defended, as a matter of principle. Its injustice to the Negroes is manifest. The Negro taxpayers of Oklahoma City, and of all districts in the State where the district school is a white school, are taxed 15 mills or less to support the white schools, or school. In addition they are taxed two mills or less to maintain their own schools, in Oklahoma County, including those in Oklahoma City. In addition, they are taxed to help retire the bonds that have been issued...to build white schools.[24]

It was into this environment of racial segregation that Principal Randolph was given permission to establish a high school program, and on May 11, 1895, the first all grade school for African American children was organized at 226 (West) California Street in Oklahoma City.[25] By 1898, the school had new principal, J.W. Sharpe and a new location, 221 East California. Students voted to give "The Colored School" its first name – Frederick Douglass School. It first appears under the name "Douglas" (sic) in city directories in the 1901 city directory. On May 26, 1903 the first graduating class of eight students received their diplomas from Douglass School.

From the beginning, Black schools were under-funded, and falling short of the constitutional mandate for "separate but equal" educational facilities. For many years Douglass students were housed in inadequate and insignificant facilities in Northeast Oklahoma City. However, lack of resources did not prevent the African American community from moving forward. By 1907 the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers had been organized by James Henry A. Brazelton, the third principal (1903-1915), and Douglass School had graduated several classes.[26] Douglass remained the only school for Blacks in the city until 1914, when Fair Park and Orchard Park schools were opened. By 1932, there were three Separate elementary schools (Bryant at 317 N. Geary, Choctaw at 119 SW 7th, and Dunbar at 1432 NE 7th) and the Douglass School campus, which had a high school and a junior high, in the 200 block of East California.

Lowell Elementary School 1910-1933

Originally Lowell Elementary School was built in 1910 for the purpose of providing a school building for white students. In 1919 Lowell was enlarged to accommodate increased student population.[27] However, by 1933, northeast Oklahoma City was predominantly African

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[23] Vaughn, John, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, *The Thirteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Tenth Biennial Report of the State Board of Education for Oklahoma*, Oklahoma City, 1930. Page 75.

[24] *Report of Survey...*, page 334.

[25] Hawkins. P. 10

[26] "An Open Door to New Horizons." Board of Education Dedicatory Program. Douglass High School. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. May 1, 1955.

[27] Criterion p. 33

American and this community now surrounded Lowell School. This fact, along with the increased Black student population crowded into obsolete and overcrowded buildings at the Douglass campus, compelled the school board to approve a major transition that moved Lowell students to other schools and Douglass students into the existing Lowell facility.

Douglass High School 1933-1955

In August of 1933, prior to the fall semester when the first Douglass students would begin attending the old Lowell School building, the school board advertised for bids "on the $165,000 Negro high-school which will be built around the old Lowell school building."[28] The plans included an auditorium, swimming pool, gymnasium and a block of classrooms. In the same year, the school board contracted with S. A. Layton and firm to design the enlarged the facility.[29] By the end of 1934, the elementary school of 9,600 square feet had become an 88,000 square foot high school. From its new home at the 600 block of North High Avenue, the first segregated African American high school in Oklahoma City found a permanent, modern home and became one of the leading educational institutions in the region.[30] Douglass High School was established as a central meeting point and the way was paved for national recognition through events, activities, and involvement by individuals of renowned importance.

Once Douglass was established as a school and a place that the community could call their own home, exciting events were planned and progressive changes took place. Douglass became a place where generations of students marched through the school doors each September seeking the knowledge that would help them break segregation barriers and destroy cycles of systemic racism that obstructed their progress. Over time, Douglass evolved from its primary function as the first segregated high school to its purpose as a central gathering place for the Oklahoma City African American community.

Douglass is a presence in Oklahoma City. Its significance cannot be measured in mere terms of physical attributes or famous personalities. Rather, it is representative of a time and place for a people whose lives were intricately woven into the fabric of daily activities through the school. Douglass functioned as a community gathering place for Black Americans both from the local Oklahoma City area, and for many others who traveled there from all corners of the nation to take part in the musical and theatrical productions, as well as the significant national political and social events. The significance of Douglass High School is in the milieu of change that it represents for a multi-generational community. It is a school of "firsts". It was the first segregated high school in Oklahoma City and the students who graduated from it helped to launch a movement that transcended time and place, leaving a permanent mark on American society as well as establishing an African American legacy throughout Oklahoma City. These firsts could be found in education, music, entertainment, journalism, literature, sports, and in the military.

During an interview with Mrs. Ruth Allen, in October 2005, the ninety-two year old veteran

[28] Daily Oklahoman, August 12, 1933.
[29] Daily Oklahoman, August 12, 1933.
[30] Blackburn.

teacher of French, English, Speech, and History at Douglass High School noted, referring to the years Douglass was located on High Avenue, "Those were the years when there were many clubs at the school." Sitting in her living room on Northeast 7th Street in Oklahoma City, no more than three blocks from the school where she taught for many years, Mrs. Allen reminisced:

> Yes, I can remember Douglass High School about that time, I have a photographic memory. C.O. Rogers was the principal. Dramatic plays were produced on a regular basis and many 'firsts' and celebrities were birthed out of Douglass High School. It was more than just a school. It was a place for many community events to take place. We had plays, musicals, multiple performances, and societies. Any event that rallied the people took place at Douglass. It was phenomenal: The teacher's knew famous people who came to visit or present. They were their friends, and they would study abroad and return home to visit and to bring an enlightened academic and artistic flavor to Douglass and they nurtured their kids with that knowledge.[31]

During those years many young people at Douglass High School were making a mark on society. The works of such notables contributed to the legacy of the arts and significant segregation case laws originating from Oklahoma that affected every African American and the movement towards integration.

Oklahoma City native, Zelia Page Breaux, the daughter of Inman Page, became the first music teacher and director of the Douglass High School band when it was still located at Walnut and California. After the move to High Avenue, Mrs. Breaux continued to teach music in the local elementary schools. From the music room and stage of the Douglass auditorium Mrs. Breaux began to present a variety of plays, shows, and entertainment revues. During these years at Douglass, Mrs. Breaux directed and influenced many young musicians and performers and the theater was frequently crowded with patrons. In 1927, the Douglass High School band was featured at the opening of the Oklahoma State Fair. Again, in 1931 with 43 musicians, Douglass was the featured band at the Sixth District Middle Western Association of Elks in Denver, Colorado. After one year at the new location, the Douglass High School Band became known nationally when they marched in the parade at the Chicago World's Fair in August 1935.[32]

Douglass High School was a growing center for other students who were influenced by Mrs. Breaux. Jimmy Rushing, "Mr. Five by Five," known for his blues vocals became famous under her tutelage. [33] Other musicians to emerge from Douglass were Eugene DePriest Jones Jr., and Alva Lee 'Bo' McCain Sr. Jones was about seventeen in 1938 when he played his saxophone in a jam session one night with Charlie Christian. "It was in a building across

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[31] Robertson, Claudette. Interview of Mrs. Ruth Allen, retired teacher from 1940's Douglass High School. September 7, 2005. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Video Recording by George Wesley. Oklahoma City Northeast Inc. 2005.

[32] Hawkins. P. 11

[33] Blackburn.

Second Street from Ruby's Grill," he recalled. "Musicians jammed there late at night in the 1930s." Jones played through three years of college and a series of Army bands during World War II. He came home to Oklahoma City and played in numerous clubs, dances and other events until 1962.[34] "Bo" McCain was a tenor saxophonist who played with Edward and Charlie Christian in the Jay McShann orchestra and with Duke Ellington.[35]

Students from the former Douglass location who were influenced by Mrs. Breaux and continued to be associated with Douglass in its new location also achieved a measure fame and influence. Ernest Whitman, one of the first graduates of 1914, began his acting career at Douglass and went to Hollywood to be cast as Quintus Jones in the 1938 NBC feature "The Townsend Murder Mysteries," and in the 1943 musical fantasy "Cabin in the Sky," Whitman appeared as the club owner.[36]

Ralph Ellison, a 1932 Douglass graduate and famous for his book, *The Invisible Man* was also influenced by Mrs. Breaux.[37] Ellison attended Douglass and became a student of music when the school was still on Walnut and California. He learned to play the trumpet for the high school band as well as with local jazz bands. Zelia Page Breaux influenced and impacted the lives of many during her years at Douglass High School, so much so, that in 1983, she was inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame and named one of Oklahoma's "100 Notable Women of Style" by *Oklahoma Today Magazine*.[38]

In addition to its performing arts achievements, Douglass also established a reputation as a competitive sports school when, in 1945, the Douglass Trojans defeated Elkhorn, West Virginia in Nashville and was crowned the National Black Basketball Champions. A few years later, Prentice Gault, a Douglass High School honor student and captain of the Trojan's football team, graduated in 1956 and entered the University of Oklahoma to become the first black to be named to the Omicron Delta Kappa, a national men's honorary leadership society, as well as the first black football player to be accepted on the Sooner team.[39]

The Douglass High School faculty was known for academic excellence. Since African Americans were not allowed to teach white students during those years, many of the Black educators who held doctoral and masters degrees served at schools like Douglass. When Douglass began offering vocational courses the Daily Oklahoman labeled them as "practical" because, finally, "The schools see at last that the one T– trades, is as important to the Negro as the three R's– [reading, riting, rithmatic]."[40] While many white leaders seemed to think the trade courses were essential for African Americans to survive, Douglass faculty strived to

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[34] Journal Record, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, "Featured Story..." Max Nichols, 4/23/2001

[35] "Jazzmen", Hannah D. Atkins. *Oklahoma Today Magazine*, Oklahoma City. p.201

[36] http://turnerclassic.moviesunlimited.com /http://www.newline.com/sites/gonewind/history

[37] "Ellison, Ralph." In Aberjhani, and Sandra L. West. Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance. New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2003. Facts On File, Inc. African-American History Online. www.fofweb.com. 2006.

[38] Jean Warner. http://oklahomawomen.blogspot.com. 8:49 AM Friday, March 04, 2005

[39] Daily Oklahoman. Tuesday, April 9, 1959. "Society Opens Door, First OU Negro Star Conquers New World."

[40] Daily Oklahoman, Sunday, May 25, 1941. "Negro Students Work to Learn: Trades Taught at City School."

teach their students about a way of life that went beyond the skills of manual labor and the service industry. Amongst many of the students who graduated from Douglass who went on to be "the first" was Henry Hawkins. Hawkins, a 1958 Douglass High School graduate was the first Black American to serve as a journalist for the Daily Oklahoman. As an alumnus, he compiled and wrote "Celebrating 100 years of Excellence 1891-1991" a Centennial Publication, published by Diamond Printing & Publishing in 1991.

After the 1930s Douglass educators and students expanded their focus from purely academic progress and the performing arts to fighting for social equality. By 1955, the Black community was strong enough to persuade the school board to officially declare a policy supporting the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education.* In actuality, the policy was ineffective in causing changes in the classroom, so that segregated classrooms remained in the Oklahoma City schools for almost twenty years after the landmark decision.[41]

The slow road to integration had its roots in the independent spirit of Blacks in Oklahoma. Challenges to all aspects of segregation occurred in the state. As early as 1918 local ministers complained about the conditions, atmosphere, and location of Douglass when it was located on Walnut and California and a loud voice was raised in the battle of segregated neighborhoods when Roscoe Dunjee founded the first black newspaper in Oklahoma City, the *Black Dispatch.* From his offices at 228 Northeast First Street, Dunjee organized the first local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP challenged legal barriers in the courts and attacked the "Bloody Fangs of Jim Crow" in the halls of power.[42]

National figures came to Oklahoma bang the drum for equality. Appointed as an official representative under presidents Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, and Harry Truman, Mary McCleod Bethune was assigned director of the federal Division of Negro Affairs and became the first black woman to serve as head of a federal agency.[43] In 1940, Bethune visited Douglass High School where the community gathered in the auditorium to hear her speak about race and social issues affecting African Americans in Oklahoma City.[44] Seven years later, Douglass hosted the 32nd Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Attendance was greater than it had been in the thirty-two year history of the organization and participants at the meeting observed "The Oklahoma City meeting was the greatest in the history of the organization." President of the organization, Bethune, presided over the conference. [45]

On June 9, 1950 the African American community staged a victory parade at Page Stadium, to celebrate the end of segregation in higher education. Thurgood Marshall, Chief Counsel for

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[41] Kenny A. Franks and Paul F. Lambert. The legacy of Dean Julien C. Monnet: Judge Luther Bohanon and the Desegregation of Oklahoma City's Public Schools. Western Heritage Books, Muskogee, Oklahoma 1984.

[42] Bricktown, Crossroads of Commerce, Crossroads of Diversity, Crossroads of Renewal. By Bob L. Blackburn, Ph.D.

[43] Women In History, P.O. Box 770682, Lakewood, OH 44107, 216.228.4779

[44] www.nahc.org/NAHC/Val/Columns/SC10-6.html

[45] The Douglass Informer. The Home Coming Edition. Friday, November 12, 1948. p. 1

the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was the honored guest at the rally. After his legal victory in the *McLaurin versus Oklahoma State Regents* case, Marshall spoke on how the community could continue the cause. At the same rally, the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers presented an award to Roscoe Dunjee for his efforts at fighting segregation through his newspaper, the "Black Dispatch."[46] Once again the community gathered at Douglass to be encouraged about the future of racial equality.

From its beginning, like many southern states, Oklahoma had legally segregated schools and maintained a separate school system until fifteen years after the 1954 Brown case. As early as 1945, the school board had considered a bond issue to raise money for a new Douglass High School. However, it wasn't until 1948 before the funding was released and not until 1955 when the new school on Northeast 9th Street and Eastern Avenue (now Martin Luther King Boulevard) would be opened for student attendance. During the 1950s some of the Oklahoma City Schools, such as Edison Elementary and Harmony were integrated but Douglass High School remained a segregated school until well after 1969 before the Oklahoma City School Board adopted a policy to desegregate the schools. [47]

AFTER DOUGLASS

After the new Douglass High School was completed at Ninth and Eastern, the old Douglass was renamed, first to F.D. Moon Middle School in 1955, then to Woodson in 1960, and finally, in 1975 it was renamed Page Woodson in honor of Inman Edward Page and Carter Godwin Woodson. In the history of Black education these two men played a significant role in the progress of African American students. Inman Edward Page (1853-1936) was a remarkable orator, educator, and the first African-American to graduate from Brown University in 1877. He went on to serve as President of several colleges, including Langston University for seventeen years. Page was the principal of 'The Separate Schools' in 1921 and, from 1921 to 1935, he served as the fifth principal of Douglass High School.[48] As principal he stressed nobility as a teacher, and over time he became a guiding light for generations of Douglass students. Late in life, he became supervising principal of Oklahoma City's separate school system for 12 years.[49]

While not an Oklahoman, Carter Godwin Woodson (1875-1950), known as the "Father of Black History," once said, "Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history."[50] Woodson believed that Blacks should know their past in order to participate intelligently in the affairs in our country. Woodson authored numerous scholarly books on the positive contributions of Blacks to the development of America. He also published many magazine articles analyzing the contributions and role of Black Americans. He reached out to schools

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[46] Daily Oklahoman. June 9, 1950
[47] Criterion p.18
[48] Hawkins. P. 10
[49] Greene, Lorenzo Johnston. Selling Black History for Carter G. Woodson: A Diary, 1930-1933. University of Missouri Press. 1996. p. 149
[50] Greene.

and to the general public through the establishment of several key organizations and founded Negro History Week, a precursor to Black History Month. Woodson's message was that Blacks should be proud of their heritage and that other Americans should also understand it.

From 1975 to 1993, Page Woodson served as a community center. From all of the interviews conducted, each person had an affection for the school that is uncommon. The African American community of Northeast Oklahoma City fondly recalls what the school meant to them. If one is to mention to any of those names who were historically connected to Page Woodson, the person will immediately know who that acquaintance is related to or connected to by family, friend or event. When a facility like Page Woodson is used to build a community, the community becomes a part of the facility and the two are identified with one another.

CONCLUSION

People living in Northeast Oklahoma City today are still connected to a time and place where one school so effectively produced and hosted a number of people known and admired by the entire nation. The Homecoming Edition of the Douglass Informer published a commentary in 1948 which summarizes the community sentiment:

> At present, our free public high school is taken for granted by the most of our citizens and those being served, who do not know the history of its development and of its undertaking in a democracy. It should be realized that Douglass High School as it is today, is not a part of our natural inheritance, but an ideal that has been realized only after many hard-fought struggles. Douglass High School has made progress in a period of development from its two teachers and eighteen students, to its present ... 45 teachers and 1183 students. Gone are the days of a two room Douglass... The Douglass of today is staffed by a faculty which is second to none in preparation, as 51 percent of its staff possess the master's degree... students and the faculty of Douglass High School point with pride, not only to its membership in the North Central Association, but also to its community relations, its program of activities, ... and the part it is playing in aiding the youth of our Community to meet their needs...[51]

(Old) Douglass High School (later Page Woodson) is more than just the name of a school or a facility where Black students attended school from 1933 to 1974. It is a facility that hosted an experience for students, teachers, parents, and a community culminating in the American dream of earning the priceless gift of an education. It was an experience that transcended the physical limitations of a school building. At a time when race relations were fragile and the nation was recovering from economic failure, a community in Northeast Oklahoma City was building a legacy for future generations.

Due to its association with, and the development of an education system for African American children in Oklahoma City, (Old) Douglass High School continues to be unique and relevant to

[51] The Douglass Informer. The Home Coming Edition. Friday, November 12, 1948. p. 1

the African American community in Northeast Oklahoma City. (Old) Douglass High School was the place where the community came together to plan, organize, celebrate, and honor African Americans in education, the arts, music, and in social and business successes, and in the evolution of integrated schools. Today, the (Old) Douglass High School continues to be listed in the Oklahoma City School District property records as the "Segregated Negro School." Of the various school buildings that served the African American population of Oklahoma City during the period of Separate Schools, there are three that were present in the 1920s or 1930s – (Old) Douglass, Carver Elementary, and Orchard Park Elementary. Of these three, (Old) Douglass not only retains the highest degree of physical, historic integrity, but it is also the most significant historically. (Old) Douglass high School was the flagship school in the Separate School system. Its teachers and administrators were of the highest quality; its students went on to be productive and significant members of the greater community. (Old) Douglass High School was a centerpiece of the African American community of Oklahoma City and is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

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