

AUGUST 3, 2025



DuSable Scholars Program participants

RACHEL CHERY, EDITOR

2025 DHA ANNUAL GALA

On March 1, 2025, the DuSable Heritage Association hosted its annual fundraising gala at the Palmer House Hotel. This year marked a milestone for the Association: 25 years of informing, educating, and illuminating the legacy of Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable. It has also been 25 years of service on behalf of the Haitian people of Chicago and its next generation. The ambiance and the invited speakers did not fail to celebrate the occasion. The evening was divided into two parts. The night began with a cocktail hour where guests enjoyed appetizers and the opportunity to preview items available for silent auction on the tables lined along the walls featuring items ranging



from art pieces, clothing, jewelry, and Haitian Barbancourt rum. Guests were not only able to view auction items in person, but this year DHA hosted its auction digitally, as well.

After the cocktail hour, guests were ushered to dinner to enjoy the main gala festivities. The masters of ceremony, Hervé Léonard, and Abigail Pierre-Louis, welcomed various speakers who highlighted DHA's momentous milestone by walking audiences through the

(continues on page 3)



DID YOU KNOW?

DuSable established a fur trading post in the 1770s/early 1780s, about half a century before Chicago was incorporated. This commercial enterprise helped shape the American government's vision of the potential of the area, leading to its decision to build the first Fort Dearborn in 1803, across the Chicago River at what is now the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear friends, partners, supporters, donors, board members, and volunteers,

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to each and every one of you. Your support and passion for our mission are the driving force behind our success. As I enter my second year as President of the DHA, I notice that our mission, at large, has never been more relevant and important for those of us elected to volunteer on the Board, promoting and preserving the legacy of Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable in Chicago, across the nation, and around the world. I'm honored to serve as the elected president and wanted to express my immense gratitude for your ongoing support and dedication to our mission. Thanks to your donation and support over the past twenty-five years, DHA will continue to fulfill our mission.

I'm proud of our past members' hard work and commitment over the last 25 years in advocating for the significant impact of DuSable and his contributions to the city of Chicago, which could have been forgotten without their tenacity in the long-overdue DuSable Park construction. I'm excited to share with you today some of DHA's accomplishments over the past two years:

- Board of Directors expansion
- Website improvement to .ORG
- Created DHA's first e-newsletter
- Revised DHA's Bylaws
- Working on a proposal to create the DuSable Community Center in downtown Chicago, added to our core mission
- Commitment to support the Haitian Coalition of Chicago partners
- Strengthening our partnerships with other organizations
- Developing and expanding our network with new partners and sponsors throughout the country
- Staying on top of the DuSable Park construction project and ensuring DuSable will be represented by a symbolic monument
- Working on creating additional educational & cultural events annually
- Working on completing a new Strategic Plan for the next 3 to 5 years

Looking ahead, we face both opportunities and challenges. We need to focus on attracting younger members to ensure the continued vitality of DHA. As we are embarking on a new strategic plan to expand our reach and impact, our plan is to reinforce DHA's mission, values, and overall vision for the next generation. I encourage our followers to actively participate in our events and get involved in shaping the future of DHA. (Please reach out to us if you are interested in joining us).

Thank you again for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Nicolas Paul
President, DuSable Heritage Association

2025 DHA ANNUAL GALA HIGHLIGHTS





Association’s past achievements and its goals for the future. These speakers included Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, Lake Forest Professor Dr. Courtney Joseph, and the event’s keynote speaker, Regine Conde Beaubœuf.

DHA also welcomed Chicago City Mayor Brandon Johnson. His presence and speech emphasized DHA’s optimism in building lasting partnerships with the city that would allow DuSable’s name and legacy to flourish. Throughout the event, guests enjoyed a gourmet meal accompanied by live performances by artists such as musician and poet Mecca “Grimo” Marcelin and the guitar duo Strings, who ushered the dancing

portion of the evening.

In addition to celebrating DHA’s efforts, the evening was an opportunity to celebrate the academic achievements of students participating in the DuSable Scholar Program (DSP) at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Dr. Jeremiah Abiade honored the program’s first graduating class. In his speech, Abiade highlighted the gaps in educational and social opportunities the DSP aimed to provide students. During last year’s gala, Abiade stated in an interview with DHA, “We want our students to be leaders in their chosen fields. We want them to have a commitment to community and to take personal responsibility to make sure that the

pipeline to STEM degrees and professions remains full and continuous when people who come from similar backgrounds as themselves.” The achievements of DSP’s first graduating class are a testament to Abiade’s hopes for the program’s success and point to its future potential. As more students begin to graduate, we hope they continue in the success they started at the DuSable Scholar Program.

In the end, DHA raised \$48,126 this year through auction biddings and donations from attendees and readers like you. We offer our sincerest gratitude. We could not have done it without you. We look forward to seeing you next year! In the meantime, check out some highlights from the event [here](#).



2025 DHA ANNUAL GALA HIGHLIGHTS



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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2025!



MEET THE GRADUATES

Kaliah Linear - Industrial Engineering
Shaun Shannon - Computer Science
Zora Shannon - Earth & Environmental Sciences
Fatou Dioum - Chemistry
Christian Garcia - Mechanical Engineering
Zaria George - Biological Sciences
Michael Bello - Biomedical Engineering
Tia Stewart - Biological Sciences
Blossom Egbonu - Computer Science
Hanifah Shoneye - Biomedical Engineering
Osayenwen Omozusi - Biomedical Engineering
Larry Bryant - Computer Science
Samantha Applewhite (Fall '24) - Integrated Health Science

WE WISH YOU GOOD LUCK IN YOUR FUTURE ENDEAVORS!

MEET AND CELEBRATE A MEMBER OF OUR DHA BOARD WITH US



FRANTZ DOSSOUS
DHA BOARD DIRECTOR

We would like to recognize Frantz Dessous for his continuous dedication to fulfilling the mission of the DuSable Heritage Association. Frantz is also the longest-serving member of DHA's Board of Directors. He has also contributed his skills in bringing sound, acoustics control, and DJing as his personal contribution to each fundraising Gala and other events. Frantz's knowledge of the music and culture of Haiti has always appealed to the Gala participants through his music selections. Frantz has also recently taken on the responsibility of Treasurer for DHA in addition to many other tasks. Frantz's dedication to DHA through music and administrative responsibilities truly merits acknowledgement and recognition.

--DuSable Heritage Association Board of Directors



SERGE JC PIERRE-LOUIS, M.D.
FOUNDER

The DuSable Heritage Association (DHA) would like to acknowledge and recognize with distinction the role and accomplishments made by Serge Jean-Claude Pierre-Louis, MD, MPH, for DHA. Serge was the founder and organizer of a group of interested individuals that developed the vision to educate the public about Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable. DuSable, originally from Saint-Domingue, Haiti, and his wife, Kitihawa, an Indigenous Potawatomi woman, established a fur trading site at the mouth of the Chicago River during the last decades of the 18th century. Their fur trading post was the catalyst for community development, which eventually evolved into the city of Chicago. Serge led the organization as President of DHA for many years. During his tenure, he established several annual events, including a Spring Gala, a Wreath-Laying Commemoration, and a walking tour each August at the Chicago River bridge. This walking tour begins at the bronze bust of DuSable, located near the site of the original trading post. Because of Dr. Pierre-Louis' dedication to educating and interacting with numerous community groups, such as the Friends of the Parks, Lake Shore Drive in Chicago has been renamed Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable Lake Shore Drive. His hard work has ensured that the late Chicago Mayor Washington's dedication to creating a park along Lake Michigan in DuSable's name has been made possible. Thanks to Dr. Serge Pierre-Louis's vision and hard work, the emerging power of the DHA's education and heritage initiatives about DuSable continues to spread even beyond Chicago and Illinois, across the nation and Canada.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF OUR FAITHFUL SUPPORTER AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS



We extend a heartfelt thank you to Michael Charles, one of our dedicated DHA interns. A junior at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Michael has made a tremendous impact through his work on our website, bringing thoughtful updates and improvements that help us better serve our community. He also supported the DHA annual gala this year by managing the ticket sales platform and enhancing the online silent auction display. Outside of DHA, Michael is the co-founder of Akknowledge, an innovative platform that connects UIC students with study partners and academic resources. We are grateful for his talent, initiative, and commitment to both DHA and his fellow students. Thank you, Michael!



A huge thank you to Maggy Corkery, a faithful supporter and the driving force behind the success of the DHA gala's silent auction for the past three years. From securing over 40 incredible items from generous vendors to expertly analyzing and setting pricing, Maggy handles it all with unmatched dedication and precision. She also ensures the auction display is beautifully organized and seamless. Each year, she rallies a loyal team of classmates who travel from near and far to support her efforts—an inspiring testament to her leadership and passion. Thank you, Maggy, for your tireless work and unwavering commitment!



We extend our sincere thanks to Emile “Paka Pala” Andre for his unwavering support of the Haitian community in Chicago. A familiar and trusted presence, Emile has participated in nearly every major Haitian event in the city. Through his impactful radio program on Radio L'Union (WLUW 88.7 FM) every Saturday, he continues to uplift and connect the community with dedication and heart. Thank you, Emile, for being a consistent and passionate voice for Haitian culture and heritage!

DUSABLE HERITAGE ASSOCIATION WELCOMES NEW HAITIAN CONSUL IN CHICAGO



The DuSable Heritage Association proudly extends a warm welcome to Mr. Jean Joseph Léandre, the newly appointed interim head of the Consulate General of Haiti in Chicago.

A seasoned career diplomat and committed public servant, Mr. Léandre brings with him over twenty years of distinguished service both within Haiti and abroad. His professional journey began at the Centrale Autonome Métropolitaine d'Eau Potable (CAMEP) in Port-au-Prince, where he rose through the ranks to serve as Director of Human Resources.

He entered the diplomatic service in 2005 when he was appointed Vice-Consul at the Consulate General of Haiti in Boston. Over the next eight years, he worked closely with the Haitian diaspora and local authorities, helping to strengthen community relations and consular activities.

In 2013, Mr. Léandre was posted to the Embassy of Haiti in London, first as Counselor and then as Chargé d'Affaires a.i. His nearly four-year tenure was marked by significant engagement with UK-based stakeholders and diplomatic missions. In 2016, he was posted to the Embassy of Haiti in Cuba, where he served as Minister Counselor and Head of Political Affairs, overseeing bilateral relations and regional partnerships.

Mr. Léandre was recalled to Port-au-Prince in 2018 to serve at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, where he held key positions within the Departments of Legal Affairs, Political Affairs, and the General Directorate. His work during this period contributed to shaping important policy decisions and strengthening the Ministry's administrative and diplomatic functions.

He currently serves as the Interim Head of the Consulate General of Haiti in Chicago. In this role, he continues to advance the mission of the consulate, promote cultural ties, and support the Haitian community across the Midwest and Pacific regions.

We look forward to partnering with Consul Léandre in continuing to build a vibrant Haitian presence in the city of Chicago and across the region.

--- DuSable Heritage Association Board of Directors

UPDATES ON THE DUSABLE PARK



An artist's rendering shows the proposed DuSable Park pavilion | Chicago Park District

Progress is finally accelerating on the long-anticipated \$15 million Jean-Baptiste Point DuSable Park. This month, Ross Barney Architects and Brook Architecture submitted the park's design and construction documents to the Chicago Park District. The two firms, selected as lead designers in 2022, are now moving the project closer to realization. While the park still requires final approvals, the Park District has signaled its support. The proposal is expected to go before the City's Plan Commission later this summer, with a potential completion date as early as summer 2027. The project is funded through a combination of sources: \$5 million from Open Space Impact Fees and a \$10 million contribution from the

developers of the nearby 400 N. Lake Shore Drive residential tower.

Design renderings reveal that the park will be accessible via the lakefront trail, a newly expanded Riverwalk, and a dedicated bus stop. The development also connects to ongoing construction at 400 N. Lake Shore Drive. On the eastern edge, visitors will find a scenic boardwalk and a pavilion honoring DuSable. Another pavilion will offer educational exhibits about DuSable and his Potawatomi wife, Kitihawa, as described by Ross Barney Architects.

For additional details, visit the [Chicago Sun-Times](#) and [Block Club Chicago](#).

2025 ADIFF FILM SCREENING



1804: The Hidden History of Haiti is a gripping documentary that explores the untold story of the Haitian Revolution—the only successful slave revolt in world history. Produced by the creator of the acclaimed Hidden Colors series, the film highlights the lives and impact of four revolutionary leaders: Makandal, Dutty Bookman, Toussaint Louverture, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Through powerful storytelling and historical analysis, 1804 examines the mindset, strategies, and unbreakable spirit that led to Haiti’s independence and shook the foundations of colonial rule.

--Description by Iyonna Rivers

The screening was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Cyndee Montes Newman and featuring Dr Courtney Joseph, Lynn Toussaint, Professor Arthur Ade Amaker, and Rachel Chery. Lynn Toussaint shared a reflection of her experience of the film and its significance:

It is with immense gratitude and pride that I reflect on my participation in the 2024 Haitian Film Festival. The experience was profoundly enriching, exceeding even my highest expectations. The screening of the documentary “1804” served as a powerful catalyst for

dialogue and understanding. This film didn’t merely recount the historical events of the Haitian Revolution and its subsequent impact; it unearthed the enduring legacy of struggle, resilience, and ultimately, hope. The narrative’s impact was amplified by the passionate discussions that followed. As a panelist, I had the privilege of engaging with a receptive and thoughtful audience, and I believe the shared exploration of this crucial period in Haitian history fostered genuine learning and connection.

DHA’s selection of “1804” was particularly insightful, given the current complexities facing Haiti. The film’s message – a testament to the unwavering spirit of the Haitian people in the face of adversity – feels especially pertinent today. It serves as a poignant reminder that Haiti is, indeed, the “mother of freedom,” a title earned through immense sacrifice and unwavering determination. This historical truth must not be forgotten, not only by the international community but, perhaps most importantly, by ourselves. A strong understanding of our history is fundamental to forging a brighter future for Haiti. The festival was more than just a cinematic event; it was a vital reminder of our collective heritage and a powerful impetus for collective action.

--Marie Toussaint

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French Heritage Society

Haitian Network Group of Detroit

BVStylez

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The DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Event: DuSable Commemoration Memorial

Location: Pioneer Court, 401 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL, 60611

Date: Saturday, August 23, 2025

Time: 11 am

Event: Screening of **1804** film

Location: The DuSable Black History Museum
& Education Center @ 740 E. 56th Pl, Chicago,
IL 60637

Date: Sunday, August 24, 2025

Time: 2 pm



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Thank You for 25 Years of Support!

We're deeply grateful for your continued support over the past 25 years. Your commitment has helped the DuSable Heritage Association thrive and grow.

To help us continue our mission, please consider making a donation using the link www.dusableheritage.org/donate or the QR code below. Every contribution makes a difference!

