



DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY
Paul Laurence Dunbar Plaque
and Brick Walkway

Arts, Education, and Libraries
Council Committee Briefing
January 18, 2005





Purpose

To update the committee on the Paul Laurence Dunbar plaque and brick walkway.



Bronze Plaque

In February 2005, during Black History month, the Library will unveil a bronze plaque to commemorate the original site of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Branch Library (1931 – 1959).



History of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Branch Library

- The branch library was a centerpiece of Dallas' African-American community in Freedman's Town during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s .
- African-Americans in Dallas had limited access to public library services before the Dunbar branch opened in June of 1931.
- The branch, named after the famous African-American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, was located on the corner of Thomas and Worthington Streets.
- The Dunbar Branch Library enjoyed great success and developed as a center of African-American culture.



History of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Branch Library (continued)

- During World War II, the surrounding neighborhood underwent dramatic changes as Central Expressway sliced through the neighborhood, displacing many residents.
- By the mid-1950s, many families moved to South and West Dallas and Hamilton Park.
- The Dunbar branch closed in 1959.



Plaque will read as follows:

Original Site of the

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR
BRANCH LIBRARY

Commemorating its service to the
African-American Community
Dallas' Freedman's Town Neighborhood

June 1931 – May 1959



Paul Laurence Dunbar Brick Walkway

- The Paul Laurence Dunbar Walkway will honor the legacy of Dallas' first African-American branch library and the citizens of Dallas who used the original Paul Laurence Dunbar Branch Library.
- The walkway will grace the entrance at the new branch library located at 2008 Kiest Boulevard.
- Commemorative bricks in the walkway will be sold by the Friends of the Lancaster Kiest Branch Library for \$100 each.



Paul Laurence Dunbar Brick Walkway

- Anyone may purchase a brick, but the purpose of the walkway is to honor those born before 1959 who used, or may have used, the original Paul Laurence Dunbar Branch Library.
- Bricks purchased by April 1, 2005 will be in place for the opening ceremony in Summer 2005.
- Brochures will be available at all Dallas Public Library locations.