

PINELLAS REMEMBERS

THE TRUTH OF RACIAL TERROR

THE COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT COALITION, AN AFFILIATE OF THE EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Rays Baseball Joins Effort to Memorialize Local Lynching History

August 3, 2020

The Pinellas Remembers Community Remembrance Project Coalition proudly announces the addition of the Rays Baseball Foundation (RBF) as its most recent member. Pinellas Remembers is one of many community coalition partners nationwide in the Equal Justice Initiative's Community Remembrance Project to "memorialize documented victims of racial violence throughout history and to foster meaningful dialogue about race and justice today."

RBF is supporting the work of the coalition in Pinellas through its membership and a \$10,000 Racial Equity Grant, which will fund an art contest for Pinellas County public high school students during the 2020–2021 school year. Pinellas Remembers is deeply grateful for the Foundation's generosity.

The art contest and a Racial Justice Essay Competition, sponsored by Montgomery's Equal Justice Initiative, will encourage students to reflect on a national and/or local historical event and connect it to present-day issues and their lived experiences. The art genres include photography, painting, vocal recordings, and spoken word. The Coalition's Contest Committee is finalizing the contest design and anticipates launching a contest website in the early weeks of the 2020-2021 school year.

"St. Petersburg's history features at least as many challenging elements as it does sunny ones," notes Gwendolyn D. Reese, who co-chairs the Pinellas Remembers Coalition with Jacqueline Hubbard. "Among the local events we anticipate encouraging young artists and writers to consider are lynchings in Pinellas County, the Sanitation Strike of 1968, the removal of George Hill Snow's racist mural in City Hall in 1966, and desegregation of schools and public spaces."

"The lynchings of at least three African American men in Pinellas County are among the most horrifying moments in our communities' history," Reese continues. "We believe that truth-telling in the form of installing a marker at the corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street and Second Avenue South where John Evans was lynched by a mob of more than 1500, the essay and art contests, presentations, and community conversations will help to bring peace and reconciliation."

"The proximity of the placement of the Pinellas County lynching marker at one on the entries to Tropicana Field is only one part of the Rays' interest in getting involved with this important work," said Rays President Brian Auld. "Our organization understands how important it is to deepen our grasp of history, given how history continues to affect our communities today. We also applaud the effort to engage local youths in exploring this history to make it living and immediate."

For more information, please see PinellasRemembers.org, eji.org, and raysbaseball.com/SocialJustice.

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