



## **#DouglassWeek 2023 event series to be held in Rochester July 10-16 in partnership with Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives**

*Announcement accompanies visit of the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Ireland to Rochester and Washington, DC in commemoration of the shared history of Frederick Douglass; further links planned*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Rochester, New York- March 16, 2023** - Today, organizers announced plans to host #DouglassWeek 2023 from July 10-16 in Rochester, in partnership with Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives (FDFI). Most events will be online, with in-person events planned for the weekend of July 14-16 in the city. The announcement follows the visit of Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Ireland, Councillor Colm Kelleher, to Rochester on March 2nd and Washington, DC on March 6th to commemorate and expand on connections between Cork and the two cities through shared ties to the life and legacy of Frederick Douglass. The inaugural #DouglassWeek was held in Cork in 2021, and Washington, DC followed as #DouglassWeek host in 2022.

#DouglassWeek is an annual event series celebrating the inspiration of Frederick Douglass around the world. The week includes discussions, performances, exhibitions and events designed to promote collaboration and engagement. Participants respond to the story of Douglass and other changemakers through historical, creative, academic, cultural and other lenses to describe the influence of history on contemporary topics and conversations. Past #DouglassWeek participants have included students and researchers, historians, visual artists and musicians, poets and writers, elected representatives, activists, community groups, and others. #DouglassWeek is a project of the non-profit organization The Globe Lane Initiative, which offers most of its events and activities free of charge.

“We are thrilled to bring #DouglassWeek to Rochester this year in collaboration with our long-time partner FDFI,” said **founding #DouglassWeek team member and The Globe Lane Initiative Vice President Kristin M. Leary**, continuing, “We’re also excited to work with people and places in the Rochester area to co-create our events and activities. Our aim is not only to commemorate icons of history like Douglass and his family, but also to provide a space to discuss the impact of their stories on current issues like identity, race, gender, and equal rights. We welcome conversations with anyone interested in joining us in July.”

**FDFI Executive Director Erica Mock** emphasized the history of the Douglass family in Rochester, saying, “We’re excited to continue our work with #DouglassWeek here in Rochester, which is such an important place to the lives and legacy of Frederick Douglass, his wife Anna Murray Douglass and the entire Douglass family. We know the Rochester community will come out in force to contribute and we’re really looking forward to the summer. We’re also glad to have spearheaded some of the ongoing links between Rochester and Ireland, and were honored to host the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork in Rochester last week.”

Frederick Douglass had just returned from a nearly two-year long antislavery speaking tour of Ireland and Great Britain when he moved his family to Rochester in 1847. In Ireland, Douglass spent several weeks in Cork in the late fall of 1845, where he delivered many powerful speeches denouncing slavery to crowds of thousands while raising money for the abolitionist cause in the United States. Douglass described his time in Ireland as “transformative,” and his experiences there were key to the development of his political thought and sense of self.

The Globe Lane Initiative/#DouglassWeek is developing several legacy projects with partners around the world to strengthen links between #DouglassWeek host cities, including the ‘Cork Abolitionists Trail,’ a walking trail of sites where Douglass lived and spoke during his time in Cork in 1845. The Trail was launched by #DouglassWeek, FDFI



and Cork City Council in 2021, and will connect with the work of #DouglassWeek and partners in other U.S. cities, in Great Britain and elsewhere.

**Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Colm Kelleher**, spoke in Rochester on March 2nd about ongoing efforts to recognize Douglass in Cork and throughout Ireland, saying, “Cork is honored by our connection to Frederick Douglass, who forged many lifelong friendships in our city during his 1845 visit. We’re glad to continue our work with The Globe Lane Initiative/#DouglassWeek and FDFI to help commemorate his impact around the world. We’ve had a fantastic response to The Cork Abolitionists Trail, and we’re delighted to be talking with officials in Rochester to plan further links to connect our students and libraries and help ensure that this important history reaches an even wider audience and encourages young people to take inspiration from the story of Douglass’s remarkable life.”

“It’s an honor to welcome Councillor Colm Kelleher to Rochester to meet with our local Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives,” said **Rochester Mayor Malik D. Evans**. “Douglass spent a month in Cork in 1845 and spoke out not only for the freedom of enslaved Africans in America, but also against the oppressive treatment of Irish peasants by British landowners during the Great Famine in Ireland. The cities of both Cork and Rochester are proud of our connections to Frederick Douglass, and his advocacy for the dignity and freedom of all people.”

**Great-great-great grandson of Frederick Douglass, Co-Founder & President of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives and Board Member of The Globe Lane Initiative, Kenneth B. Morris, Jr.** said, “Rochester is so important to my family. Frederick Douglass lived in Rochester for 25 years, longer than any other place in his life, and raised his family here in the city. We also know that my great ancestor found such comfort and friendship in Ireland, and specifically in Cork, a place that has also become very special to me. It’s particularly fitting that we join our friends from Ireland in this announcement. We are very happy that we are furthering efforts to take the message to more young people, too. We hope many people can join us in July to commemorate my great-great-great grandfather and all he stood for and achieved throughout his life.”

Following the meetings in Rochester, Deputy Lord Mayor Kelleher and other Cork officials, including Councillor Paudie Dineen and Cork City Council Chief Executive Ann Doherty, traveled to Washington, DC, where they met on March 6th with #DouglassWeek partners at the National Park Service and on Capitol Hill. The delegation also met with Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser and Deputy Mayor John Falchicchio to discuss the Douglass-Ireland connection, their shared experience as #DouglassWeek host cities, further issues shared by Cork and Washington and plans to develop and deepen the relationship between the two cities.

Organizers welcome and encourage anyone interested in #DouglassWeek 2023 to participate, collaborate, or pitch an event, project or other idea. The deadline for proposal submission is May 19, 2023. More information can be found at [www.douglassweek.org](http://www.douglassweek.org), on Twitter at @DouglassWeek23, @DouglassWeek on Instagram, or on the #DouglassWeek YouTube channel or Facebook page.

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