**Celebratory event series launched to commemorate visit of Frederick Douglass to Ireland**

**Call for contributions on the 175th anniversary of the visit by the African-American abolitionist**

175 years ago, a formerly enslaved man, who had escaped from bondage in Maryland to become a leader of the movement to end slavery in the United States, visited Ireland. Fredrick Douglass was an African-American abolitionist who, between 1845-1846, lectured to packed audiences across Ireland. To commemorate this historic visit, University College Cork (UCC) academics - in collaboration with students, artists, writers and community groups around Ireland - have launched **#DouglassWeek** with the support of the Frederick Douglass Family.

[**#DouglassWeek**](https://www.douglassincork.com/douglassweek) is an all-island, creative and collaborative event series, taking place in the week of Douglass’s self-chosen birthday in February 2021. **#DouglassWeek** will run from the 8th-14th February 2021 andwill feature a variety of performative events, creative installations and critical discussions, offering a collection of responses to Douglass’s footprint in Ireland. The public are invited to participate in **#DouglassWeek**; the organisers welcome ideas for “Creative Commemorations” from Douglass enthusiasts around the world, with a specific focus on Douglass’s life and his journey across the island.

During his visit to Ireland, Douglass visited Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Belfast. He met with Daniel O’Connell, a major inspiration in his fight against injustice, and reflected upon the devastating effects of the famine then beginning to sweep the nation. Writing towards the end of his four-month tour of Ireland, Douglass wrote: “I can truly say I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life since landing in this country. I seem to have undergone a transformation. I live a new life.”

Dr Caroline Schroeter, coordinator of the event series, explains that “#DouglassWeek aims to connect people who share an interest and passion for Frederick Douglass, but also offers a platform for people to discuss contemporary issues related to his life and legacy: racism and racial justice, human and civil rights activism, social activism, refugee crises, American-Irish relations, creative forms of commemoration, and other related topics that remain relevant in the 21st century”.

“We are hoping that members of the public, schools, universities and community groups will respond to this call and celebrate a historic encounter that was transformative for Douglass and those he met”, commented Dr Tim Groenland, co-coordinator of the event programme.

“The #DouglassWeek efforts to commemorate Douglass and celebrate his connection to the diverse city of Cork include a drive to rename a public space after this legendary campaigner for justice”, notes Dr Dónal Hassett, the third team member of #DouglassWeek. Cork activists are lobbying to achieve this via a petition, which readers can [sign here](http://chng.it/LSRwXHZtdH).

Interested parties can find more information and make suggestions for potential events through [our website](https://www.douglassincork.com), by emailing us or by [signing up for our newsletter](http://eepurl.com/heTNj1). “We are more than happy to assist in developing unique and exciting ideas and are looking forward to seeing many creative responses, ideas, and events commemorating Douglass and everything he stands for” stated Sarah McCreedy, the fourth co-coordinator of #DouglassWeek.

**To register an idea please fill out this “**[**Get Involved**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScc-vtuVrWXvHC4IVg8RV0u0S-KZ4qvXvDaibyKdetMtqr_Iw/viewform?usp=sf_link)**” form.**

Due to current health restrictions, the majority of events will be run virtually, in a blended format, or with social distancing measures in place. Accordingly, government guidelines should be followed where appropriate. **The registration deadline is the** **7th of January, 2021**.

For media interviews and more information [contact the #DouglassWeek team directly here](https://www.douglassincork.com/press-kit) or at [info@douglassincork.com](mailto:info@douglassincork.com)

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