

Howard Notebook

Howard Extra

Civil Rights Leader Shares Memories

Susan DeFord Miranda S. Spivack

and

956 words

9 June 2005

[The Washington Post](#)

FINAL

T02

English

Copyright 2005, The Washington Post Co. All Rights Reserved

Dorothy I. Height, an iconic figure in the American civil rights movement, spent Sunday afternoon in southern Howard County sharing her recollections of a long life devoted to social activism with an audience at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel.

Height, 93, sporting one of the fashionable hats for which she is famous, spoke from her wheelchair on the stage of the laboratory's Kossiakoff Center Auditorium. The moderator for the event was Gwendolyn E. Boyd, an executive assistant at the lab and former national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. About 200 people attended the gathering, sponsored by the lab's Black History Month committee and the Black Faculty and Staff Association at Johns Hopkins.

Height, appointed president of the National Council of Negro Women in 1957, helped the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Roy Wilkins, Medgar Evers and other black leaders chart the strategy of the civil rights movement. After 41 years as president of the council, Height became chairwoman and president emerita in 1998.

A musical about her life -- "If This Hat Could Talk: the Untold Stories of Dr. Dorothy Height" -- is scheduled to premier at the Lincoln Theater in downtown Washington and run June 15-26. It's based on her 2003 memoir, "Open Wide the Freedom Gates."

Height has received many awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. She received another accolade this week when County Executive James N. Robey declared that Sunday was "Dr. Dorothy I. Height Day."

Houses Taken off List

Blandair and Troy, two historic manor houses in Howard that suffered decades of deterioration and damage, are doing much better these days, said local preservationists. The two county-owned properties have been removed from a list of endangered historic places compiled annually by Preservation Howard County.

"We feel confident they are both in good hands," said Fred Dorsey, a member of Preservation Howard County's board of directors. Restoration efforts were overseen by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

Two new properties have taken their places on the "Top Ten Endangered Sites" list, which includes places that the preservation group says are in significant decline or face intense development

pressure. They are the 19th-century Brumbaugh House, on Main Street in Elkridge, and a stone milestone marker along Route 108 that may date to the road's origins in the 18th century.

In addition, the list includes slave quarters at Montjoy, an eastern Howard farm being developed for houses. Wet heavy snows in recent years have caused further deterioration to those quarters, Dorsey said. Also included is Clover Hill, an 18th-century house at the county's Rockburn Heritage Park, which lacks a plan for being reused, he said.

Other properties on the list include the chapel at St. Louis Church in Clarksville; Mount Moriah Lodge, a 19th-century black community building on Guilford Road; the 19th-century Elk Ridge Assembly Room; the Woodlawn slave quarters, owned by the Columbia Association; the Claremont Overlook home in Elkridge; and the long-closed Enchanted Forest storybook theme park west of Ellicott City.

Enchanted Artifacts

Petting farm visitors and birthday party celebrants at Clark's Elioak Farm got a surprise Saturday when three trucks and trailers pulled up with artifacts from the Enchanted Forest theme park.

The Little Red School House, the Giant Sombrero and Jack's Bean Stalk with its looming giant are some of the latest structures salvaged from the shuttered theme park, which was a popular attraction for decades along Route 40. The corporate owner of the Enchanted Forest park property, which was developed as a shopping center in the 1980s, has said that Clark's Elioak Farm can have all the Enchanted Forest pieces it can move.

Martha Clark, owner of the petting farm along Route 108, said fundraising efforts have covered much of the relocation costs, but estimates for moving some of the Enchanted Forest's larger structures -- the Merry Miller's House, the Old Woman's Shoe House, the Tree House and Three Little Pigs House -- amount to tens of thousands of dollars.

"We are a small business, and it is a big expense," she said. A planned mid-August celebration of the Enchanted Forest's opening 50 years ago may also become a fundraiser, she said.

Downtown Development

General Growth Properties Inc. will hold a second public session about its view of a master plan for Columbia's Town Center. The meeting is set for 7 p.m. June 28 at the company's lakefront headquarters on Little Patuxent Parkway.

Meanwhile, the Howard County Planning Board is expected to reopen its hearings July 11 on General Growth's proposal for a commercial development on the "Crescent site," 51.7 acres next to Merriweather Post Pavilion in downtown Columbia. The company unveiled those plans during a public meeting recently but wasn't required to formally present them to the planning board.

The board has asked General Growth for a presentation.

Traffic Enforcement Boosted

County police say they typically see more speeding and reckless driving among students the last week of the school year. With school ending next Thursday, police will step up traffic enforcement in school zones. Drivers caught speeding or driving recklessly will be issued citations.

A 17-year-old driver was killed in 2001 when his Honda struck a utility pole in a speed-related accident that occurred on the last day of school as three students left Atholton High. Police are encouraging parents to talk with their teens about the dangers of driving recklessly.

Staff writers Alicia Cypress and Linda James contributed to this report.

