Ida B. Wells

"A Life and Legacy worthy of Honor and Celebration."

$250,000 Fundraising Goal

Now is the time to honor Ida B. Wells

Ida B. Wells is nationally recognized as an anti-lynching advocate, a champion of civil rights and women's suffrage. But when she lived in Memphis, she was still just a black woman and she was "run out of town for stirring the Negroes up."

Her life was threatened and her office on Beale Street destroyed for reporting on the brutal Memphis lynching of three men in 1892: Thomas Moss, a good friend who owned the People's Grocery, and his business partners, Will Stewart and Calvin McDowell.

Ida B. Wells risked her life to oppose oppression, racism, and violence in America. She deserves to be honored for her heroic stand on injustice that inspired change and challenged American societal ailments.

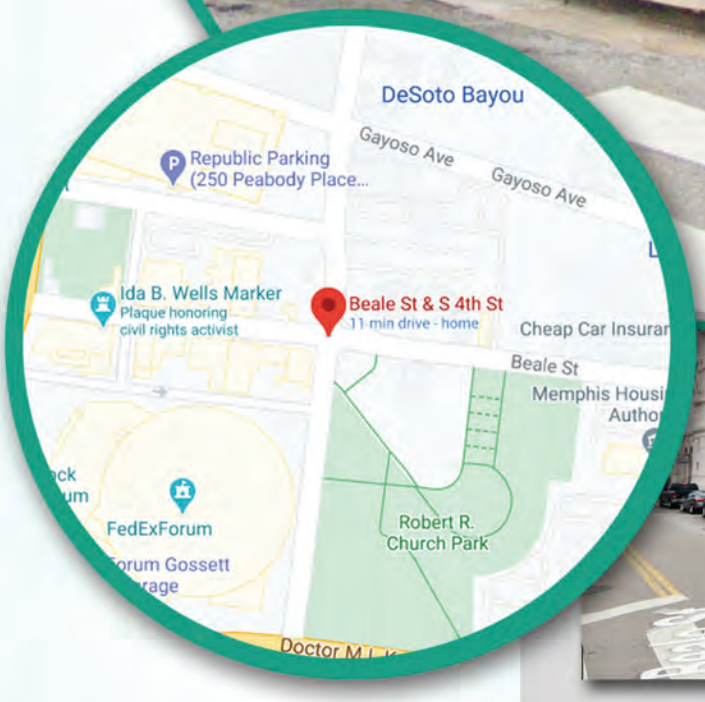
The Memphis Memorial Committee – in partnership with the Neshoba Community Resource Center – invites you to join us in raising $250,000 to erect a bronze life-size statue in honor of Ida B. Wells. The statue will be the centerpiece of the Ida B. Wells Plaza at the intersection of Beale and 4th Streets, and an important stopping point on Memphis' Heritage Trail. The plaza will include seating, landscaping, and plaques that acknowledge the supporters of this tribute to Ida B. Wells.

With the memorial to Ida B. Wells we will honor her heroism and inspire those who continue her legacy.

160 years since her birth, 144 years after she first arrived in this city, 130 years after Ms. Wells was run out of town, and 88 years since her death, a memorial will right a wrong that has long overshadowed our City Beautiful.

A memorial to Ida B. Wells will pay that which we have owed this great woman since 1892.

- The Memphis Memorial Committee



Memphis Owes a Debt to

Ida B. Wells

PROPOSED SITE LOCATION:
Downtown Memphis
at the corner of
Beale Street & Fourth Street

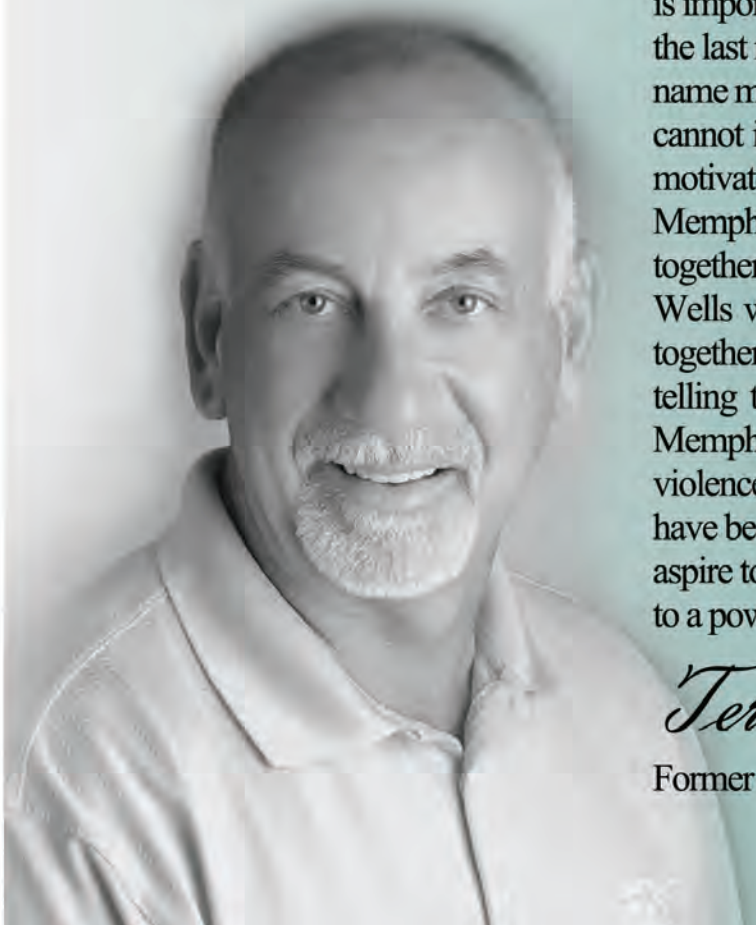
"THE WAY TO RIGHT A WRONG IS TO SHINE
THE LIGHT OF TRUTH UPON THEM."
- IDA B. WELLS

HONORARY CHAIRS

"It is an honor to be part of a team commemorating a legendary black woman whose community impact is remembered in journalism, education, activism, and innumerable other avenues towards justice. Ida B. Wells said, 'There must always be a remedy for wrong and injustice if we only know how to find it,' Change and equity for all can only be achieved by shining a light on injustices, no matter what ugliness the glow may reveal. As a leader in shining the light on poverty and its effects on women, children, our city, and this nation, I am honored to serve as honorary co-chair of this campaign. I hope to allow Wells' words to guide me, as now more than ever, we amplify voices from the past and the present to mold a better future."

Ruby Bright,

President and CEO of the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis



What's in a Name?

Creating a memorial to the life and activism of Ida B. Wells is important to me as a Memphian and as a white man with the last name of "lynch." A lot of people don't give my last name much thought – they think its just my last name. But I cannot ignore the meaning and the cruelty of the word – it motivates me to be part of the healing of our city. As Memphians we need to recognize our past and work together to create a just future. Honoring the life of Ida B. Wells will inspire us to stand up to injustice and to band together for justice now and in the future. For some of us telling the story of Ida B. Wells and her departure from Memphis will sting. We don't want to remember our violence and cruelty. But we need to recognize who we have been so we can become the city – and the people – we aspire to be. Join me in supporting this important memorial to a powerful woman who fought for justice.

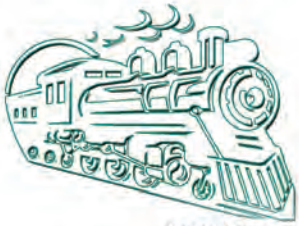
Terry Lynch,

Former Chairman of Leadership Memphis

IDA B. WELLS BARNETT TIME LINE

1862 — Born July 16th in Holly Springs, MS.

1876 — Ida B. Wells assumed custody of her siblings after the death of her parents and youngest siblings during the yellow fever epidemic. She managed to continue her education at Rust College.



1882 — She moved with her sisters to Memphis to live with her aunt. She later continued her education at Fisk.

She began teaching at Woodstock School in Shelby County making $25.00 per month

1884 — Ida Wells began her crusade against race/gender injustices. She filed a successful lawsuit against the Chesapeake People and Ohio Railroad Company for forcing her off the train when she refused to give up her seat to a white woman.

1886 — She taught at Grant School.

1889 — Wells began a partnership with the owner of the "Free Speech and Headlight." Rev. Nightingale was the Pastor of Beale Street Baptist Church. The paper became such a financial success, Wells was able to resign from teaching and become a full time journalist.

1892 — Three of Wells' friends were lynched: Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell and (William) Henry Stewart. These men were owners of The People's Grocery Store at Walker and Mississippi in South Memphis. A group of angry white men broke in. When Ida got the news, she took out her pen and exposed this tragic miscarriage of Justice. Her office was destroyed and threats against her life were issued.

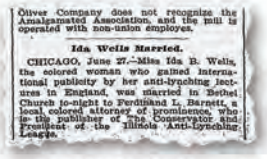
1893 — (1893-1894) Wells spent time in England and many American Cities exposing the horrors of lynching on her anti-Lynching crusade.

IDA B. WELLS BARNETT TIME LINE

1895

Ida B. Wells published the "Red Record", a statistical analysis of lynching.

Ida B. Wells married Attorney F. L. Barnett in Chicago. Attorney Barnett was also the editor for the Conservative, a Black Newspaper.


Oliver Company does not recognize the Amalgamated Association, and the mill is operated with non-union employes.

Ida Wells Married.

CHICAGO, June 27.—Miss Ida B. Wells, the colored woman who gained international publicity by her anti-lynching lectures in England, was married in Bethel Church to-night to Ferdinand L. Barnett, a local colored attorney of prominence, who is the publisher of the Conservator and President of the Illinois Anti-Lynching League.

1909

The Niagara Movement evolved to become the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

1913

1913 - 1920's
Ida B. Wells played key role in the Women Suffuragist Movement advocating for the right to vote. She marched along with national protestors, refusing to march in the rear of the line.

1930

Ida B. Wells Barnett offered herself as a candidate to serve in the Illinois State Legislature. This run for public office made history. She was the first Black Woman to run for public office in the USA.

1931

Ida B. Wells Barnett passed away in Chicago, leaving a legacy of fighting injustices. She was 69.

1987

July 16, 1987
Ida B. Wells Tennessee Historical Marker dedication by the Community Relations Commission and proclaimed Ida B. Wells Day by Mayor Richard Hackett.

A portrait of Ida Wells was hung in Memphis City Hall, December 16 at 3:00 pm - Mayor Dick Hackett and the Community Relations Commission .

1990

Ida B. Wells was honored by the US Postal Service with a commemorative stamp. The ceremony was held at the Beale Street Baptist Church on February 3. Beale Street Baptist was the unofficial post office for the many Blacks in the Beale Street area.

2019

The Memphis Memorial Committee organized by Dr. Miriam Decosta Willis and Dr. L. LaSimba M. Gray, Jr. initiated the concept of erecting a life-size statue of Ida B. Wells in Memphis in December of 2019.

2021

Ida B. Wells Plaza, statue and memorial dedication on July 16, 2021.

Ida Bell Wells-Barnett was a Memphian.

She lived in Memphis, Tennessee for 10 years as an educator then journalist, but most of all she stood up for justice. She deserves to be honored for her heroic stand against injustice that inspired change and challenged American societal ailments. Wells was a resilient woman who beat the odds. She risked her life to oppose oppression, racism, and violence in America. Wells deserves to be recognized for her fight against segregation.

EARLY LIFE, FAMILY AND EDUCATION

Born a slave in Holly Springs, Mississippi, on July 16, 1862, Wells was the oldest daughter of James and Lizzie Wells. The Wells family, as well as the rest of the slaves of the Confederate states, were decreed free by the Union thanks to the Emancipation Proclamation about six months after Ida's birth.

Living in Mississippi as African Americans, they faced racial prejudices and were restricted by discriminatory rules and practices.

Wells' parents were active in the Republican Party during Reconstruction. Her father, James, was involved with the Freedman's Aid Society and helped start Shaw University, a school for the newly freed slaves (now Rust College), and served on the first board of trustees.

It was at Shaw University that Wells received her early schooling. However, at the age of 16, she had to drop out when tragedy struck her family. Both of her parents and one of her siblings died in a yellow fever outbreak, leaving Wells to care for her other siblings. Ever resourceful, she convinced a nearby country school administrator that she was 18, and landed a job as a teacher.

Born:	July 16, 1862, Holly Springs, MS
Died:	March 25, 1931, Chicago, IL
Spouse:	Ferdinand Lee Barnett (m. 1895–1931)
Children:	Alfreda Barnett, Herman Kohlsaat Barnett, Alfreda Duster, Charles Barnett, Ida B. Barnett
Siblings:	Eugenia Wells, Eddie Wells, Annie Wells Fitts, Lily Wells, James Wells, George Wells, Stanley Wells

CHAIRPERSON

Ida B. Wells earned a place in Memphis history when she stood up against lynchings and all forms of injustices. She earned a seat at the "table of Nobility" without trying. She simply wanted to expose evil by shedding light on evil.

When her three friends; Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Henry Stewart were lynched in 1892, she editorialized the Lynching as "cold blooded murder." A mob destroyed her newspaper office and threatened her life. She was told if she came back to Memphis, she would be lynched.

Knowing that a group of Black men vowed to protect her, she wisely chose not to return, choosing instead to protect her protectors and others in the city who could suffer from white vigilantes.

Ida B. Wells left Memphis in 1892, we can bring her back in 2021 and she will never have to leave again. We will bring her back in honor and splendor by placing a life size statue of her on Beale Street where her career began.

Join us in honoring Ida B. Wells by making a generous donation for the Memphis Memorial to Ida B. Wells.

Gratefully Yours

L. LaSimba M. Gray, Jr.

The Memphis Memorial Committee

Honoring Ida B. Wells

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Honorary Chair

Terry Lyunch
Honorary Chair

Dr. L. Lasimba Gray, Jr.
Chair

Dr. Miriam Decosta Willis
Vice Chair

Pastor Darell Harrington
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Elaine Lee Turner
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Tonya Weathersbee

$250,000 Fundraising Campaign

Donor Benefits

	$25,000 +	$15,000 - $24,999	$ 5,000 -$14,999	$ 1,000 -$4,999	All Gifts
Replica of the Statue or Bust of Ida B.Wells	●				
Commemor ative Plaque	●	●			
Photo or graphic illustration of the statue signed by the sculptor	●	●	●		
Name on plaque at the Ida B. Wells Plaza*	●	●	●	●	
Certificate of Appreciation & Special VIP invitation to the unveiling	●	●	●	●	●

*Size of name to be commensurate with size of gift

Join Us in Honoring Ida B. Wells
To be a partner and support the efforts, please make all tax-deductible checks payable to:

Neshoba Community Resource Center

Attn: A Memphis Memorial to Ida B. Wells
7715 E Holmes Rd Memphis, TN 38125-3823
901.754.3979

OR ELECTRONIC/ MOBILE DONATIONS

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