

NEW STATUE IN EMANCIPATION HALL

# FREDERICK DOUGLASS

The United States Capitol Visitor Center honors Frederick Douglass upon the occasion of the placement of his statue in Emancipation Hall.

**Frederick Douglass** (1818-1895) was born into slavery in Talbot County, Maryland. He went on to become one of the country's most noted spokesmen for civil and human rights. After escaping slavery in 1838, he moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts, and became involved in the abolition movement, speaking and writing in support of the end of slavery in the United States. He published three autobiographies over his lifetime and started a newspaper, *The North Star*. During the Civil War he recruited soldiers for the newly formed African American regiments, the Massachusetts 54th and 55th.

Douglass supported the cause of human freedom throughout his life, working to achieve voting rights for African Americans and women, promote equal rights for freedmen, and secure anti-lynching laws in the United States. Douglass made

Washington, D.C., his home and was deeply involved in D.C. government and the civic affairs of the city. He held several government positions, including United States Marshal for the District of Columbia in 1877, Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia in 1881, and in 1889, Minister-Resident and Consul General to the Republic of Haiti.

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*"I will unite with any one to do right, and with no one to do wrong!"*

— FREDERICK DOUGLASS

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Douglass continued to write and speak until his death on February 20, 1895. The National Park Service acquired his Washington, D.C. home, Cedar Hill, on September 5, 1962, and in 1988 renamed it the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site.

On September 12, 2012, the United States Congress passed H.R.6336, directing that a statue depicting Frederick Douglass should go on display in Emancipation Hall of the United States Capitol. President Barack Obama signed the bill into law on September 20, 2012.

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## **Frederick Douglass**, bronze, by Steven Weitzman

The statue of Frederick Douglass was placed in Emancipation Hall on June 19, 2013. June 19, also known as Juneteenth, commemorates the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas. News of the Emancipation Proclamation was not widely known in Texas until after the Civil War ended. On June 19, 1865, Union forces arrived in Galveston, and Juneteenth celebrates the message of emancipation they brought.

*Architect of the Capitol*

