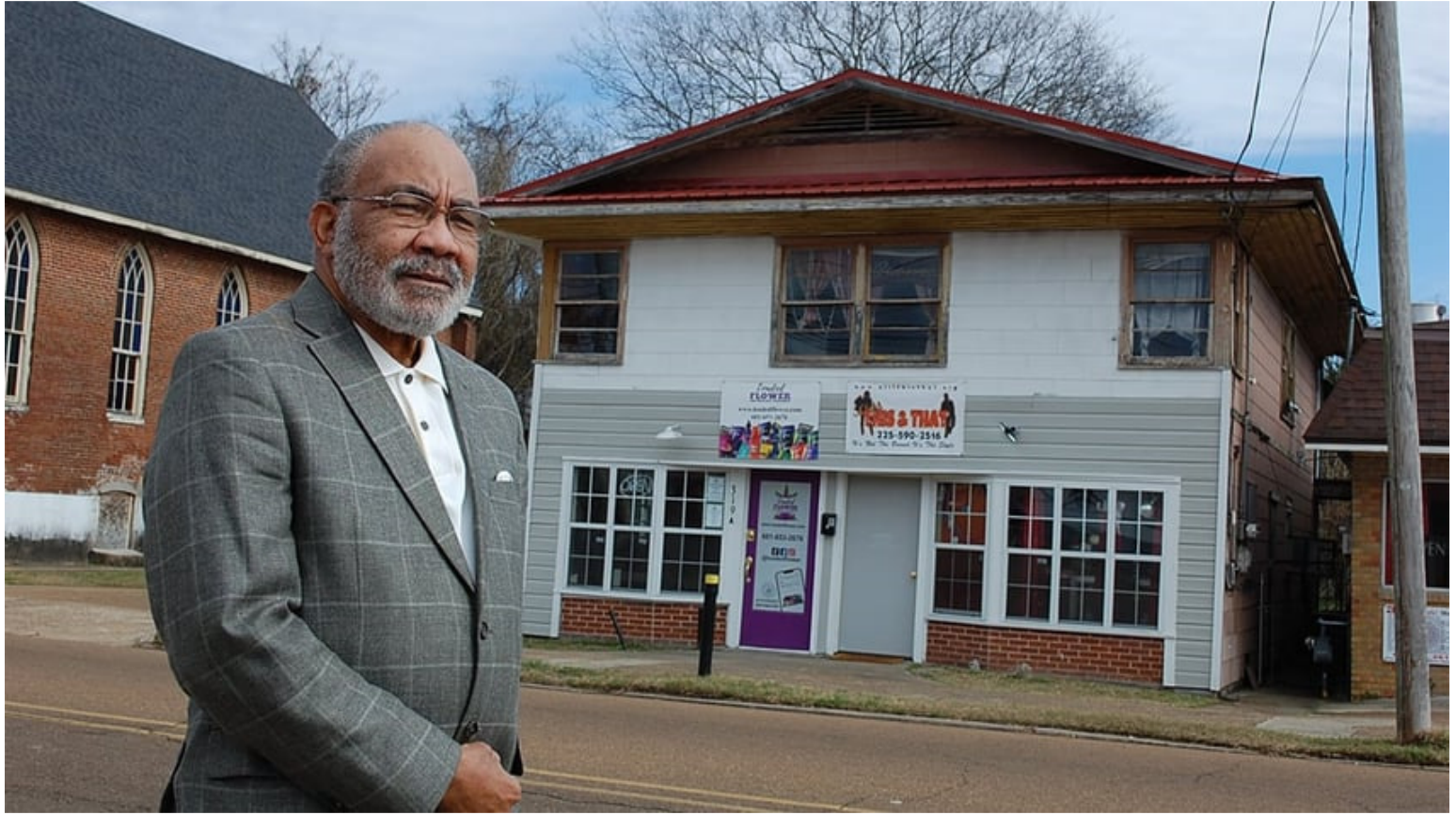


Natchez to Unveil Second Mississippi Freedom Trail Marker

By [Newsdesk](#) Oct 21, 2024 11:08am

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Willie Carter, owner of Donnan's Barbershop (Visit Mississippi)

The city of **Natchez, MS**, has announced its second marker on the **Mississippi Freedom Trail**, located at **Donnan's Barbershop**, the birthplace of the **Deacons for Defense and Justice** in Natchez in the 1960s.

"We are honored to add another Natchez site to the Mississippi Freedom Trail, recognizing Donnan's Barbershop and the legacy of the Deacons for Defense and Justice," said **Roscoe Barnes III**, cultural heritage and tourism manager at **Visit Natchez**. "This marker will serve as a powerful reminder of the courage and resilience displayed in the face of violence and injustice during the civil rights movement, while honoring the individuals who fought to protect the community."

The Deacons for Defense and Justice was first organized in 1964 in **Jonesboro, LA**, in response to increasing violence against civil rights activists and the lack of protection for Black communities. The Deacons aimed to provide armed protection for civil rights workers and the Black community against the Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacy groups. The Natchez Deacons organized in September 1965.

A ceremony will be held during the **NAACP Mississippi State Convention** on November 9, 2024, at the **Zion Chapel A.M.E Church**, located at 228 North Dr. M.L. King Jr. St., followed by the marker unveiling at 319 North Dr. M.L. King Jr. St. The event will include remarks from **Dr. Akinyele Umoja**, author of "We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement;" **Willie Carter**, owner of Donnan's Barbershop; Alderwoman **Felicia Bridgewater-Irving**, Ward 4; **Rev. Dr. Robert James**, president of the Mississippi NAACP; **Joyce Arceneaux-Mathis**, president of the Natchez NAACP; **John Travis Spann**, program and outreach officer for **Mississippi Humanities Council**; and Mayor **Dan Gibson**. The unveiling ceremony will be free and open to the public.

The Mississippi Freedom Trail was established in 2011 to commemorate Mississippi's pivotal role in the **U.S.** civil rights movement. More than 40 existing markers throughout the state highlight the people, places and events that were instrumental in this period—from the years leading up to the historic movement to the years Mississippi served as ground zero in the national fight for equality.

The Mississippi Freedom Trail is administered by **Visit Mississippi**, the official tourism organization dedicated to promoting the state to visitors across the U.S. and the world, in partnership with the **Mississippi Humanities Council**. Support for this collaboration is made possible by a State Tourism Grant from the **U.S. Economic Development Administration**. The EDA State Tourism Grants, issued in 2021, totaled \$510 million in direct awards to help states invest in marketing, infrastructure, workforce and other projects to rejuvenate safe leisure, business and international travel.

The Mississippi Humanities Council is a private non-profit corporation funded by Congress through the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. The Council creates opportunities for Mississippians to learn about themselves and the larger world and enriches communities through civil conversations about the state's history and culture.

For more information, visit www.visitnatchez.org.

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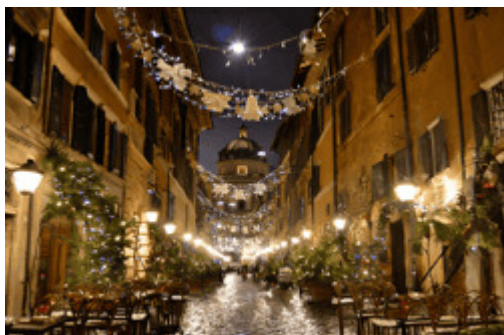
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