

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



PRESS RELEASE

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IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

May 17, 2016

Community Commemoration Set for African Burying Ground Anniversary

PORTSMOUTH, NH – On Monday, May 23rd at 8:45 a.m., Mayor Blalock will lead a small ceremony at the African Burying Ground to commemorate the one year anniversary of the reburial ceremony. The public is invited to attend, encouraged to bring their own cut flowers and join the Mayor, project advocates and volunteers in this remembrance that will take place rain or shine. Members of the public who cannot attend the morning event are invited to place flowers at the Memorial throughout the day.

The event is intended to honor those buried at Chestnut Street and to recall the powerful community events that marked the project completion last May. The vibrant events from 2015 included an overnight Ancestral Vigil at the New Hope Baptist Church and a reburial ceremony during which 19 pall-bearers and over 500 community members witnessed the unveiling of the artworks and the return of previously exhumed human remains to the completed Memorial. These events were followed by an energetic community celebration at the Stokel Commons at Portsmouth Middle School.

In the 12 months following the reburial event and unveiling of the Memorial Park artworks, the African Burying Ground and Memorial Park has been widely visited and embraced by the community and spurred community conversations and greater understanding of Portsmouth's history. Since the opening, several performances and visual arts programs have taken place in the community based on the African Burying Ground. Visitors have included locals, international groups and academic programs, and several national and regional publications have noted the historical site and community efforts to create the

Memorial. Just last week, the project was awarded a 2016 Preservation Award from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

For more information on this project and related events, please visit www.africanburyinggroundnh.org.