



Office of the Mayor

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Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Commercial Avenue Renamed Paul Robeson Boulevard

New name adopted during 100th anniversary of Robeson graduation from Rutgers

New Brunswick, N.J. March 28, 2019 – The City of New Brunswick is proud to announce the renaming of Commercial Avenue to Paul Robeson Boulevard, a tribute to an important American and member of the New Brunswick community.

Paul Robeson (1898-1976) was widely considered to be a man ahead of his time and lived an accomplished life rich in culture, politics, education and activism.

He was the third African-American student to enroll at Rutgers, and while there, was a star pupil and athlete that graduated as Valedictorian of the Class of 1919. In the years that followed, Robeson went on to achieve great fame in music, acting and culture and was a champion for social justice and a respected figure in contemporary American history.

The proposal for the change came about as a result of collaboration among community members and local organizations in light of the centennial anniversary of Robeson's graduation from Rutgers University.

Partners in this project included the Civic League of Greater New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Board of Education, Holy Family Parish, the City of New Brunswick, Rutgers University and Sharon Baptist Church.

All addresses on the affected street, including residences, businesses, houses of worship and nonprofits were sent letters in December 2018 notifying them of the proposal for the change. A public meeting was also held during the second week of January. Another letter will be sent to all affected addresses in the coming weeks with information as to what to expect next.

Signage bearing the new name street name will be going up in the coming weeks.

The renaming of the street comes during a period in which a number of positive changes have been coming to fruition in the surrounding neighborhood. This past September, Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts opened its doors on a brand-new 60,000 square foot addition to the school.

Feaster Park and Pittman Park are also scheduled for extensive renovations, driven largely in part by the feedback and suggestions of neighborhood residents and community members. A new sculpture of Robeson, commissioned by New Brunswick Public Sculpture, is also in the works for placement at Feaster Park.

“One hundred years ago, extraordinary student and star athlete Paul Robeson set off to change the world on the wings of his Rutgers education,” said Mayor Jim Cahill. “To all who pass this way, this new name will serve as a reminder of a remarkable man of our community and the many great things he went on to do.”

The City of New Brunswick is the county seat for Middlesex County and home of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, the world headquarters for Johnson & Johnson and two globally-renowned hospitals. New Brunswick is an educationally-focused City as well as “The Healthcare City.”

All of New Brunswick’s developments provide seamless access to major transportation lines and an extensive dining scene and an arts district, located in its bustling downtown. The City is focused not only on bringing in new residents and businesses, but also on improving the lives of every one of its residents.

For more information, please visit www.cityofnewbrunswick.org.