

Annual Black History Recognition Luncheon to Honor The Iconic French Dukes Precision Drill Team

The Annual Black History Recognition Luncheon on February 22, 2025, at Weber's Boutique Hotel in Ann Arbor, MI, will honor the iconic French Dukes.

ANN ARBOR, MI, UNITED STATES, February 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Annual Black History Recognition Luncheon will occur on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at Weber's Boutique Hotel, 3050 Jackson Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. It celebrates African Americans' rich history and contributions. This year's event will spotlight the French Dukes Precision Drill Team. This iconic group has been a cornerstone of the Ann Arbor community and a symbol of cultural pride and artistic excellence for our nation.



French Dukes Performing since 1961

The French Dukes Drill Team, established in 1961 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a distinguished African American precision drill team renowned for its military-style discipline and dynamic performances. Founded by local youths inspired by drill teams they observed in parades, the French Dukes quickly symbolized unity and pride within the community. Their rigorous practice sessions, often held at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market, drew enthusiastic audiences from surrounding cities and states, fostering a lifetime sense of camaraderie and compassion among members. What began as a community group of young men, most now in their seventies, has remained a source of profound historical pride.

As they continued to win all competitions and perform across the nation and Canada, they represented a positive beacon of hope and pride during the 1960s voter registration and civil rights movement. The team's excellence led them to win competitions nationwide. They served as the civilian color guard during Richard Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign stop in Lansing, Michigan. Mr. Nixon was so impressed that he invited them to his Presidential Inauguration

parade; they were the first Black, non-military precision drill team to perform at a presidential inauguration. The "Dukes" were invited to the Ed Sullivan Show and numerous Canadian events, and their artifacts and trophies are in the Smithsonian Institute.

In recent years, efforts have been made to honor and preserve the legacy of the French Dukes, such as author Debbie Ann Taylor's children's book Step it Up! You can also see the documentary The French Dukes: Rhythm, Roots, and Legacy by Filmmaker Frederic M. Culpepper. Community members are encouraged to contribute pictures, stories, and insights to enrich the Ann Arbor African American Museum. The French Dukes' enduring impact on the Ann Arbor community and the nation exemplifies its rich cultural heritage and inspires future generations many years later.

For additional information about the legacy of The French Dukes, [please follow this link](https://youtu.be/EibcV_lGhkl) : https://youtu.be/EibcV_lGhkl

The luncheon will feature:

Keynote Speakers highlighting this year's theme: Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, and Inspiring the Future

Performances by the French Dukes Precision Drill Team

Awards Ceremony recognizing Organizations and a community leader

Cultural Displays and Artifacts

This family-friendly event is open to the public. [Tickets are available at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/elks-annual-black-history-month-recognition-luncheon-tickets-1106670253519](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/elks-annual-black-history-month-recognition-luncheon-tickets-1106670253519).

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Friends of the French Dukes

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