

FAIRMOUNT PARK

CONSERVANCY

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Boxers' Trail Gateway Honors Legendary Philadelphia Boxers *New Signage Tells Neighborhood Stories*

SEPTEMBER 2, 2020 (PHILADELPHIA) – Fairmount Park Conservancy and the Strawberry Mansion community gathered in East Fairmount Park to dedicate a modern monument to local boxing greats. The Boxers' Trail Gateway at Dauphin and Greenland Drives, an underutilized structure, has been revitalized and improved to honor Philadelphia's legendary boxers, including favorite son Smokin' Joe Frazier.



“We’re honored to be able to share the story of the Boxers’ Trail in Fairmount Park with the help of our friends in the Strawberry Mansion and boxing communities,” said **Maura McCarthy, Ph.D., Executive Director of Fairmount Park Conservancy**. “We hope this exciting new gateway offers a place for both reflection and inspiration from the athletes who paved a path for future generations.”

In collaboration with local agency Little Giant Creative (LGC), the Conservancy installed a series of informative panels on a pergola structure to celebrate the Boxers’ Trail, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department’s boxing programs across the city, and Philadelphia’s rich boxing history.

“On behalf of the Frazier family, we want to thank you for this honor and recognition,” said **Joe Frazier, Jr.** “I truly believe it is never too late to do the right thing and as usual God is right on time. Our father never made it about himself and the acknowledgement of these other illustrious Philadelphia boxers is also the right thing to do.”

The original gateway at Dauphin and Greenland drives was installed in 2008. Today, the new-and-improved gateway features custom lettering reading, “Boxers’ Trail” and a “shadow boxer” silhouette. The panels highlight the boxing careers of Bennie Briscoe, Joe Frazier, Bernard Hopkins, and Matthew Saad Muhammad and provide a map of the Boxers’ Trail. Other panels

include tips on fundamental boxing moves demonstrated by amateur boxers from Athletic Rec's boxing gym as well as the creed of Joe Frazier's gym.

With support from ArtPlace America, the Conservancy and LGC collaborated with the Strawberry Mansion community, the local boxing community, and family members of the boxers to creatively tell the story of the Boxers' Trail.

"Little Giant Creative's work is driven by a desire to represent cities with the nuance they deserve. Philadelphia is steeped in stories, many of which are still waiting to be told," said **Meegan Denenberg, co-founder of Little Giant Creative**. "We're proud to lend our creative lens to tell this particular story with Fairmount Conservancy — to mount an interactive, compelling tribute to one of the world's greatest fighters and the city's wider integral boxing legacy."

BACKGROUND

The Boxers' Trail is a 3.8-mile trail with wooded and paved paths that winds through East Fairmount Park, creating unique views overlooking the Schuylkill River and providing access points to Fairmount Park for neighboring communities.

Deeply tied to Philadelphia's boxing culture, the Boxers' Trail is a place that many Philadelphia boxers, including Smokin' Joe Frazier, have used as part of their training regimes. Legend has it that when Muhammad Ali wanted to challenge Joe Frazier, he came to the Boxers' Trail because he knew that's where he would find Frazier.

VIRTUAL BOXERS' TRAIL 5K

The dedication of the Boxers' Trail Gateway comes three weeks before the annual Boxers' Trail 5K Walk and Run hosted by Philadelphia Parks & Recreation with the support of Philly Races. This year the annual race is going virtual. Participants are encouraged to run or walk the trail from September 19-26, 2020. Registration is \$20 and proceeds support youth programs at Mander Playground in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. Residents of Strawberry Mansion can connect with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation at PPRstewardship@phila.gov for discount information. Learn more at boxerstrail5k.com.

Download high-resolution images here: <http://bit.ly/ConservancyPressKit>.

Fairmount Park Conservancy exists to champion Philadelphia's parks. We lead capital projects and historic preservation efforts, foster neighborhood park stewardship, attract and leverage investments, and develop innovative programs throughout the 10,200 acres that include Fairmount Park and more than 100 neighborhood parks around the city. For more information, please visit myphillypark.org, join us at facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy, and follow us on Instagram and Twitter @myphillypark.

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Photos courtesy of Fairmount Park Conservancy.