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Black Businesses in Urbana to be Recognized with New Sign on the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail

Champaign, IL—The Champaign County African American Heritage Trail and the Experience Champaign-Urbana Foundation will install an additional sign in downtown Urbana at 120 W. Main St. on Tuesday, October 22 at 1:30 p.m. **Media are encouraged to attend.**

This sign, the 22nd sign on the Trail, celebrates the Black-owned businesses that shaped Urbana. The earliest example is General Cass Lee who in 1887 owned a six-chair barbershop at 127 Main St. where he served judges, lawyers, and others who frequented the County Courthouse.

One of the most notable success stories is that of Shelton Laundry, which grew from a home business started in 1934 to a brick-and-mortar space at 1104 N. Goodwin Ave. in Urbana that had 75 employees across many races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Shelton's Laundry served much of the University of Illinois fraternities and sororities as well as the Chanute Air Force Base and the U.S. Army's Fort Benjamin Harrison near Indianapolis. The business lasted over 50 years in Urbana before closing in 1986.

"A common theme among the Trail is entrepreneurship and success across business, education, and community sectors," says Jayne DeLuce, President & CEO of the Experience Champaign-Urbana Foundation. "These businesses paved the way for future success and business owners we patronize today in our community."

This sign is generously sponsored by Busey Bank.

About the Experience Champaign-Urbana Foundation

The Experience Champaign-Urbana Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, generates resources that support the destination experiences of people who visit, work, and live in the greater Champaign County area. For more information: <https://experiencecu.org/foundation>

About the Champaign County African American Heritage Trail

The Champaign County African American Heritage Trail is a celebration of the lives and contributions of African Americans in the Champaign County area. The mission is to educate today's residents and visitors about the rich cultural history of a people whose stories have been largely unrecognized, but who directly shaped the place we call home. For more information: <https://www.ccafricanamericanheritage.org/>