

JUSTICE EDWARD O. GOURDIN VETERANS' MEMORIAL PARK

Preliminary Park Program



PARK PURPOSE: To...

- honor Justice Gourdin and service of Vets
- serve as a “common” for Dudley Square
- involve institutions in future stewardship
- be a better park for the neighborhood
- be a daytime respite for nearby workers
- stimulate peace by honoring veterans
- OTHER?

POTENTIAL USERS:

- Dudley Square residents
- school children
- workers on lunch breaks
- citizens attending/participating in demonstrations
- veterans celebrating Veteran’s Day
- OTHER?

POTENTIAL USES: A place to...

- gather, sit, converse, enjoy shade and lawn
- look out at Dudley Square activity from a place of calm
- stage Veterans’ Day events
- view the sculpture
- hold public demonstrations
- use as a backdrop for photographs
- OTHER?

ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- views into the park from all sides
- improved circulation connecting the park to the surrounding neighborhoods
- flagpole
- interpretive signs and/or panels that tell Justice Gourdin’s story
- sculpture honoring African American veterans of all wars
- OTHER?

About Justice Edward Orval Gourdin...

- eulogized as a “scholar, athlete, soldier, judge”
- first man in history to make 25 feet in the long jump (1921)
- first African American and first Native American to be appointed a Superior Court judge in New England
- appointed as a Special Justice to Roxbury District Court
- appointed U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts (1933)
- won the silver medal in the long jump in 1924 Summer Olympics (Paris, France)
- colonel commanding 372nd infantry in the US and oversees and first African American Brigadier General in Massachusetts

"The day may come when the fact that a new state appointment is a Negro will cease to be a matter of note. Unfortunately, that is not yet."

- Justice Gourdin, about his own appointment to Roxbury District Court)



Edward Gourdin at the 1924 Olympics



Robert Freeman's posthumous portrait of Justice Gourdin hangs in the Old Suffolk County Courthouse

19.6 million: Number of military veterans in the US (2013)

1.6 million: Number of female veterans in the US (2013)

11.3%: Percent of African American veterans out of total US veteran population (2013)

African American Veterans

"There has been no war fought by or within the United States in which African Americans did not participate."

- National Association of Black Veterans

