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**Fifth Ward photos wanted**

Museum wants to create area mural, digital archive

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Officials of the Museum of Cultural Arts-Houston want to document the Fifth Ward neighborhood's history from the 1800s through the present with the Fruits of Fifth Ward Mural & Digital Archive project. Fifth Ward resident, executive director and artist Reginald Adams, who cofounded the museum in 1999 with his wife Rhonda Adams, is asking former and current residents to bring no more than five of their favorite Fifth Ward photos to a community outreach event 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday at Julia C. Hester House, 2020 Solo St.

"It (the photos) just needs to have some relation to Fifth Ward," he said. The prints will be used in creating a ceramic tile mosaic mural to be completed by mid-August and installed on the walls at the intersection of Lyons and Schwartz in September. Artists from the museum will design and create the mural. A digital archive of the photos also will be available on the Internet.

Fifth Ward is a part of Houston on the rebound, Adams said. "The goal is not to stop development, because it is inevitable. But if Fifth Ward changes, I would love to see this mural stand as a testament of what it used to be."

By May, Adams said the museum will begin creating a design for the mural. The museum will get history students from Fifth Ward's Phillis Wheatley High School to help with research. "I know this information, but I want to bring (the students) the research component, so they can begin pulling back some of these layers," Adams said.

The museum has completed similar projects, including a mural that documented aspects of the East End community at Edison Middle School and another in 2004 that archived the 90-year history of the Ship Channel, displayed in the visitor's center at the Port of Houston Authority. The museum has received \$27,000 in grants from the History Channel, the city and the United Way for the Fifth Ward project.

Fundraising for the mural, which will cost about \$85,000, is ongoing, Adams said. Individuals from the Fifth Ward and throughout Houston are encouraged to donate. Those who attend the outreach event will be asked to give \$5, though no one will be turned away, he said. Adams said he thinks it is important for former and current Fifth Ward residents to contribute to the project even if the donation seems nominal. "We want that kind of grassroots support," he said. "Those are the kinds of elements that bring on a feeling of long-term ownership and pride."

Fifth Ward resident Alvin Byrd is so excited that he has already dug up mementos from the past. Byrd, a Navy veteran who was born and raised in Fifth Ward, said returning there after 10 years of "seeing the world" was like "coming full circle." "This will act as a visual timeline of our community," Byrd said.

"For a person that grew up in Fifth Ward, the only history that we got was when we got the chance to sit down with our elders."

Among the images he will contribute is a picture of himself and other teens who were members of a social group for Fifth Ward youths called Hope Development, which was organized in the 1960s, he said. While in Hope Development, Byrd said he learned black history and had the chance to interact with other youngsters in his neighborhood without fighting.

"I have a picture we took as a basketball team in 1967," said 52-year-old Byrd, who now works in District B Councilman Jarvis Johnson's office as constituent services coordinator. "That picture reminds me of all the good times we had." Other events to collect pictures will be announced later, Adams said.

For additional information about the project, e-mail [reginald@mocah.org](mailto:reginald@mocah.org) or call 713-224-2787.