
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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Summit Park Being Renamed as Regina Dunkin Park

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March 19, 2024 - Summit Park, 1218 Henry Ave., has officially been renamed Regina Dunkin Park by the Beloit City Council during its meeting Monday night.

A group of community, government, and business leaders brought forward the initiative to rename the park earlier this year. The Parks, Recreation and Conservation Advisory Commission and Plan Commission recommended the council approve the request which was submitted by local pastor Dannie Evans.

“Mrs. Dunkin has been a great help to our community over the years and has been an exceptional example to both old and young who live here. ... After much consideration and careful thought, we are requesting a park located in the Merrill neighborhood be renamed in her honor,” said Evans in his letter to the City Council. “I believe it is important for our youth who live there now and who live there in the future to see that the City of Beloit honors those who have worked hard to make this a great city.”

An unveiling event to celebrate the park’s name change will be held at 1pm Saturday, April 13, 2024, at 1218 Henry Avenue. The community is invited to join this celebration, which will be held near the basketball courts in the southwest side of the park at the corner of Summit and Dewey avenues.

Dunkin, the current City Council president, recused herself from participating in the discussion and vote. City Council policy states that renaming actions can be made in honor of an individual, who over a long period of time, has devoted outstanding amounts of time, talent and effort to the advancement of the Beloit community.

“I am humbled by this recognition and hope that the park renaming inspires the children and families who will visit and celebrate events there over the next few decades,” Dunkin said. “As our next group of leaders spend their time playing soccer, basketball, grilling out, enjoying the playground equipment or splashing in the splash pads, I hope they will

advance my legacy of service and community advocacy. I want young children to know that if I can do this, they can too.”

Dunkin’s achievements include:

- Executive Director of the Merrill Community Center for nearly 20 years, including leading the effort to construct a new building for the Merrill Community Center.
- Member of the Wisconsin State Public Defender Board for 18 years, including two years as Chair (the first black woman to serve as Chair), Vice Chair, and service on the Board’s Outreach Committee.
- Member of the City Council for eight years, including serving four terms as President (the first black woman to serve as President), two terms as Vice-President, and served on the Appointment Review Committee, Alcohol Beverage License Control Committee, Downtown Beloit Association, Equal Opportunities Commission, and Plan Commission.
- Member of the Board of Education for Beloit School District for six years, including serving as Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and also Chair of the Policy and Personnel Committee and Curriculum Committee.
- Member of the Board of Directors for the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation (GBEDC), including serving two years as Chair (the first black woman to serve as Chair) and service on the Finance and Audit Committee, Quality of Life Committee, Business Education Partnership Committee, and Executive Committee.
- Prior and current membership on various Boards of Directors for Wisconsin Women in Government, Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corporation, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of Rock County Advisory Council, Visit Beloit, Family Services of Southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois (which includes the Beloit Domestic Violence Survivor Center and the Sexual Assault Recovery Program (SARP)), one of the founding members of the Women’s Fund, as well as many other non-profit boards in Beloit and throughout the State.
- Served as President of the Eclipse Charter School for the School District of Beloit.
- Served as United Way Campaign Chair for Beloit Health System.
- Member of Wesley Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.
- Served as President of the United Way Blackhawk Region Agency Directors.
- Served on the following committees, councils, and coalitions: Vice President’s Council for Beloit College, National Black Council of School Board Members (NBC), Health Alliance of Rock County (HEAR), Rock County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), Beloit Memorial High School Academy Steering Committee, Beloit Memorial High School Ford NGL Advisory Committee, Beloit Infant Mortality Coalition, and Girls Who Rock Mentorship Program.
- Implemented Community Action’s Fresh Start Program.
- Started a children’s program at the Beloit Domestic Violence Survivor Center.

Support for the renaming included a letter from Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, who wrote “Regina Dunkin is a dedicated public servant and community advocate, and in

recognition of her lifetime of work giving back to the Beloit community and breaking down barriers so that other individuals, especial women and people of color, might be leaders in their local community, she is well deserving of this honor.”

Additionally, she has been recognized as a community leader on numerous occasions including being an award recipient of the following honors, to name just a few:

- Zonta Tribute to Women-Minnie Mills-Enking Memorial Volunteer Award
- United States Congressional Recognition Award from U.S. House of Representatives
- School District of Beloit-Hero Award
- National School Board Association Award (Levels I - III)
- United Way Campaign Coordinator Award
- City of Beloit Citizens Academy Award
- Janesville School District-Martin Luther King Jr. Volunteer Award
- Wisconsin League of Women Voter's-Women in Politics Award
- Outstanding Girl Scout Award
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters Volunteer Award
- Beloit College (Help Yourself) Program Award
- NAACP Community Award
- University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Community Award
- School District of Beloit Award - Served as President of the Eclipse Charter School
- First black woman to receive the YWCA Woman of Distinction Award (nominated by Congressman Paul Ryan)
- Family Service Association Volunteer Award
- City of Beloit Proclamation - “Regina Dunkin Day”
- Wisconsin Law Journal Unsung Hero Award
- United Way Champion for United Way Blackhawk Region (2018)
- Beloit College Martin Luther King Jr. Award (2018)
- Beloit College Ousley Scholar-in-Residence Award (2020)
- First black woman to receive the Beloit Daily News Laurence A. Raymer Headliner Award (2020)
- Listed as one of Wisconsin's 51 Most Influential Black Leaders (Madison 365) (2020)
- President's Award from Beloit City Council (2021)
- Groundbreakers and Trailblazers Award from the Beloit Coalition of Churches (2023)
- Trailblazer Award from Rising Queens (2023)
- Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation Service Award (2023)
- First person to be selected as “Elected Official of the Year” from 45th Assembly District of the State of Wisconsin (2024)
- Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce's first recipient of the Walter R. Knight Diversity Award (2024)

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