



James Killion Day Remembers The Man and His Legacy, And Other Veterans at Killion Park

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
May 31 2022 1:37 PM

ALTON – The first Annual James Killion Day at Killion Park at Salu on Saturday was an overwhelming success, with a capacity crowd and remembrance of the legendary Alton man and also other past and present veterans on Memorial Day weekend.

The City of Alton Mayor, David Goins, presented a memorable proclamation to the members of the Killion Family. Local veterans shared their service stories and DJ Love was the main entertainment of the day. Doves were released in reverence of veterans who have died. Also, event attendees enjoyed food, and drinks and took home a commemorative frisbee, as well as had the opportunity to win tickets to a St. Louis Cardinals baseball game. There were birthday cakes and cookies in Killion's memory. James' immense contributions to the Alton region were recognized.

James' son, Jim Killion Jr., spoke at the event and said Killion Park has strong memories for all of his families and was a special place for his father. Jim Killion Jr. acknowledged Abe Lee Barham for his volunteer efforts in getting the park named in his father's honor. He also recognized James Killion Day committee members Crystal Love, Sheila Goins, and alderwoman Rosetta Brown for their efforts with Barham for the event.

Barham said Mr. Killion's legacy was that he was "a bridge builder." "He will always be remembered in Alton history for his efforts," Barham said.



James Killion was the first black person to be hired at Laclede Steel and he fought to have a union in the business. James retired in 1983 after 38 years of service. He received his education in the Alton School District, then Shurtleff College in Alton and the University of Illinois in Champaign, and the University of Missouri Steel Work Institute.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army during the outbreak of World War II and was a member of the D-Day forces and a reservist during the Korean Conflict. The park was named in his honor because of his service to the community, breaking of several inhibiting color barriers, and a general spirit of leadership.

When David Goins spoke about Mr. Killion one of his finest memories was that Mr. Killion led an effort in his church to purchase a letter jacket for the future mayor when he was young. Killion's good deed has never been forgotten by Goins, and he has tried to repay that admirable move many times over in his own life.

“I have very fond memories of Mr. Killion,” Mayor Goins said.

Christal Love said celebrating Mr. Killion’s birthday and accomplishments in an awesome way was an excellent way to kick off the summer and Memorial Day weekend.

