

Killion Day This Saturday Will Feature Well-Known Author/Poet As Keynote Speaker

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The Annual James Killion Day Ceremony on Saturday, May 27, 2023, has a solid lineup of activities and should be a first-class way to kick off the Memorial Day weekend.



The event starts at 1 p.m. on Saturday at James Killion Park in Alton and will begin with a community lunch and a Meet and Greet with the Killion family. The Riverbend Community Gospel Choir will also perform. From 2:30 to 4 p.m. will be the ceremonial portion of the event.

Alton Fourth Ward Alderwoman Rosetta Brown will be the emcee.

There will be a presentation of colors and music, plus acknowledgment of sponsors and dignitaries. David Frye, Mary Hyndman, and Gene Baldwin, an author and family friend, will be the event's keynote speaker.



Baldwin is a playwright, essayist, journalist, poet and fiction writer. His play “Water Brought Us and Water’s Gonna Take Us Away,” about the Underground Railroad in Illinois and commissioned by the National Park Service, was produced at the Prop Theater in Chicago. Baldwin was a producer/interviewer for the Chicago segment of the National Tuskegee Airmen Oral History Project. Gene and his friends Lorenzo Small and Charlie Baird raised money for the monument in Alton City Cemetery honoring George and Arnold Cisco, Tuskegee Airmen brothers and Jerseyville and Alton residents. His current project is a book in progress: “There Is No Color In Justice,” about the civil rights struggles of Alton and the history of racism in Illinois.

Baldwin dedicates that book to his late great-great grandfather William Holman Jones, who was a conductor of the Underground Railroad.

Several members of the Killion family will be in attendance and Rev. Sheila Goins, an organizer of the event, encouraged those in the community to come out and meet the family members.

Alton Mayor David Goins will present a proclamation. The Williams Family plans a dove release, Sheila and Brown will provide closing remarks, then TAPS will be played by the VFW.

[Click here for a video from last year's Killion Day.](#)