

Lincoln School reopens doors as the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities, opening set for Dec. 1

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EDWARDSVILLE – The historic Lincoln School will reopen its doors on Dec. 1, 2015, after being closed for more than 60 years, under a new name and with a new mission.

The former school is now home to the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities, which aims to conduct activities that promote mutual understanding and respect among people of different cultures, races, ethnicities, religions and other distinctions, and influence positive social change.

The Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation (MJCHF) and Lewis and Clark Community College (L&C) will work together to bring community programming, educational opportunities and more to the Center.

“The Center will be used to inspire youth through education,” said Ed Hightower, executive director of the MJCHF. “It will also serve as a place where major speakers and influencers from across the country will draw thousands of visitors to the Madison County region.”

Hightower said the MJCHF is currently completing details regarding the first national speaker at the Center.

“The Center will also serve as a venue for hosting other educational activities, including those related to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics),” Hightower said. “In addition, young people will be provided with opportunities to engage in activities that promote tolerance, respect, dignity and a sense of self-worth.”

Mannie Jackson, a former Lincoln School student, influential business leader and namesake for the Center, is excited the building he once attended will soon reopen.

“The Lincoln School has personal and significant meaning to me and the Edwardsville community,” said Jackson, who demonstrated his love and commitment to the school by purchasing the dilapidated building and later donating it to L&C.

“The Edwardsville community is so fortunate to be the home of Mannie Jackson,” Hightower said. “As a youth growing up, he demonstrated what hard work and perseverance is all about. Mannie’s journey was comprised of opportunities to succeed or fail. He chose hard work, respect, kindness and understanding, rather than using his conditions, obstacles and circumstances as excuses. That is what the Center will provide – opportunities.”

The MJCHF and L&C will host an open house at the Center from 1-6 p.m. Dec. 7.

Members of the public, as well as former Lincoln School students, are encouraged to attend. In the meantime, visit the MJCHF’s website at www.mjchf.org to learn more about the Foundation and the Center.

Jackson said he is excited about the team that has been assembled to administer the mission of the Center.

“L&C President Dr. Dale Chapman, Dr. Ed Hightower and the national board of directors are a winning team,” Jackson said.

Chapman has led Lewis and Clark Community College to be one of the nation's most outstanding institutions, employing more than 660 individuals and contributing approximately \$338 million in regional economic impact.

Hightower served on the Lewis and Clark and Southern Illinois University Boards of Trustees, and recently retired after 19 years as superintendent of the Edwardsville School District.

“We could not have selected a more experienced and diverse board of directors,” Jackson said.

The MJCHF Board of Directors will include: President Mannie Jackson, former owner of the Harlem Globetrotters; Vice President Robert Watson, current chairman of the L&C Board of Trustees; President Dale Chapman, secretary and treasurer; Director Elsie McCabe Thompson, current president of the New York City Mission Society; Director Vada Manager, chief executive officer of Manager Global Consultant Group; Director Mark Goldenberg, cofounder of Goldenberg Heller Antognoli & Rowland, P.C; and Director David J. Downey, founder of the Downey Group Inc.

The Center includes a 140-seat ballroom and a 60-seat conference room, which are available for rental by the public for business meetings, small weddings, conferences, holiday parties, family and high school reunions with optional catering provided.

Reservations may be confirmed by calling the MJCHF at (618) 655-2881 or by visiting www.mjchf.org/reservations.

The Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities is a division of Lewis and Clark Community College and is supported by the Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities Foundation. The Center was created to bring together diverse audiences and humanities programming through lectures, readings, dialogues, public engagement opportunities and educational activities.