

Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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For More Information:

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Ford Joins South Suburban Black Wall Street- Chicago on Trip to Bring Awareness to Historic Race Riot in Oklahoma

TULSA, OK– Illinois Representative La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, was in Tulsa, Oklahoma, over the weekend to increase awareness of the race riot that took place in the small black residential district of Greenwood in 1921. The historical trip to Oklahoma was organized by the South Suburban Black Wall Street-Chicago.

During the course of 18 hours on May 31 and June 1, 1921, more than 1,000 homes and businesses in the predominantly African American Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa, Oklahoma were destroyed, and approximately 50 to 300 people were killed during the riot. “It is my hope that we do not forget the terrible events that took place here in Greenwood,” said Ford at the Black Wall Street Dinner in Tulsa on June 20. “We are beginning to see racial tensions being reported more often in the media every day. What happened here in Greenwood will hopefully remind everyone of outcomes that unnecessary violence will produce. We must practice listening and understanding before we act on speculation and anger.” At the dinner, the Citywide Juneteenth on Historic Greenwood Celebration, Ford received a Citation of Congratulations from the Senate of the State of Oklahoma, initiated by Oklahoma State Senator Kevin L. Matthews. The Citation recognized Ford’s dedication to the heritage, history and hope of the Greenwood District Black Wall Street of America in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Ford introduced House Resolution 0450 in the 98th General Assembly to acknowledge the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921(<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/98/HR/PDF/09800HR0450lv.pdf>).

On May 30, 1921, an incident involving Dick Rowland, an African-American shoe shiner, and Sarah Page, a white elevator operator, occurred in the Drexel Building in Tulsa. This incident would rapidly escalate into one of the single worst incidents of racial violence in American history. The most common explanation is that Rowland stepped on Page’s foot as he entered the elevator, causing her to scream, and Rowland was arrested by the police. A report by a local newspaper, which later proved false, made the allegation that Rowland had attempted rape. On June 1, 1921, thousands of armed whites had gathered along the fringes of Greenwood. They poured into the African-American district, looting homes and businesses and setting them on fire and displacing many of the residents from their homes.

For more information, contact one of Ford’s constituent service offices: 816 S. Oak Park Avenue in Oak Park at [708-445-3673](tel:708-445-3673), 4800 W. Chicago Avenue in Chicago at [773-378-5902](tel:773-378-5902) or in the Stratton Office Building in Springfield at [217-782-5962](tel:217-782-5962), or visit www.lashawnford.com.

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