

## **Community Remembrance Project Information & Invitation Franklin County Citizens Interested in Undoing Racism**

Neighbors United-Undoing Racism has existed in Franklin County since 1997. Its mission is: Undo racism by providing opportunities for all people to be treated with dignity and respect through education and communication.

[see <https://www.facebook.com/neighborsunitedmissouri/> ]

Encouraged by recent public attention focused on racial injustice, mass incarceration and black history in general, a group of Franklin County residents has been studying these issues in order to understand more about race relations locally. Their research led them to the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, AL.

Founded in 1989, the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) is a private nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced or abused in state prisons. They also lobby for elimination of the death penalty.

In recent months EJI has been publicly recognized for its soul searing memorial representing the lynching of thousands of African Americans.

### **The National Memorial for Peace and Justice**

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which opened to the public on April 26, 2018, is the nation's first memorial dedicated to the legacy of enslaved black people, people terrorized by lynching, African Americans humiliated by racial segregation and Jim Crow, and people of color burdened with

contemporary presumptions of guilt and police violence.

The memorial structure on the center of the site is constructed of over 800 corten steel monuments, one for each county in the United States where a racial terror lynching took place. The names of the lynching victims are engraved on the columns. The memorial is more than a static monument. In the six-acre park surrounding the memorial is a field of identical monuments, waiting to be claimed and installed in the counties they represent. Over time, the national memorial will serve as a report on which parts of the country have confronted the truth of this terror and which have not.

EJI is inviting counties across the country to claim their monuments and install them in their permanent homes in the counties they represent. Eventually, this process will change the built environment of the Deep South and beyond to more honestly reflect our history. EJI staff are already in conversation with dozens of communities seeking to claim their monuments. EJI approaches these conversations — and all of our community education work — with thought and care. EJI shares historical and educational material with community members, encourages participation from communities of color, and works with partners to find an appropriate geographic location for each monument to ensure that the process of claiming monuments helps local communities engage with this history in a constructive and meaningful way.

Modeled on important projects used to overcome difficult histories of genocide, apartheid, and horrific human rights abuses in other countries, EJI's sites

are designed to promote a more hopeful commitment to racial equality and just treatment of all people.

### **Community Remembrance Project:**

There are four steps for participating in this national effort for truth, recognition, peace and reconciliation:

1. Creating a Community Remembrance Coalition
2. Completing a Soil Collections Project
3. Installing a Historical Marker
4. Achieve the National Memorial for Peace and Justice Monument Placement

### **References**

- <https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/memorial>  
the Equal Justice Initiative Memorial website
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/25/us/lynching-memorial-alabama.html>  
a NYT article, A Lynching Memorial Is Opening. The Country Has Never Seen Anything Like It - The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opening Thursday in Montgomery, Ala., is dedicated to victims of white supremacy. By Campbell Robertson on April 25, 2018

- <https://www.riverfronttimes.com/newsblog/2017/06/29/missouri-had-the-second-highest-number-of-lynchings-outside-the-south>

an RFT article about Missouri's lynchings.  
Missouri Had the Second Highest Number of Lynchings Outside the South Posted By Elizabeth Semko on Thu, Jun 29, 2017 at 6:59 am

## **INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

Please contact me if you are interested in participating in any way in this important Franklin County project.

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