

# HISTORIC SCHOOL TO GET NEW LOOK

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## ABSTRACT

Yesterday, Mayor Sheila Dixon and other officials met at the school to discuss its future as a tourist attraction and to focus on its symbolic importance in the civil rights struggle.

## FULL TEXT

A new city commission has been given the task of devising a plan to renovate and reuse P.S. 103, a historic West Baltimore elementary school attended by Thurgood Marshall and other African-Americans during the days of segregation.

Built in 1877, P.S. 103 sits at 1315 Division St. and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Marshall attended P.S. 103 from 1914 to 1920, and it is there he first experienced the inequities of school segregation. From P.S. 103 he rose to become a legendary civil rights lawyer, acclaimed for his role in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the legal case that outlawed school segregation. Afterward, he became the first African-American to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Yesterday, Mayor Sheila Dixon and other officials met at the school to discuss its future as a tourist attraction and to focus on its symbolic importance in the civil rights struggle. Dixon announced the creation of the Mayor's Commission on Former Public School 103.

"I created this commission to come up with a plan to sustain the legacy of this very special Baltimore landmark," said Dixon, adding: "What better way to inspire our young people than by preserving the very spot where many local and national leaders began their legendary journeys?"

P.S. 103 is in the neighborhood where Marshall grew up. It sits in one of the nation's largest African-American historic districts, and it's expected to be a principal attraction in the Pennsylvania Avenue Heritage Trail, which is scheduled to open this year.

In its glory days, Pennsylvania Avenue was the cultural center of Baltimore's black community, the place where black movie theaters, restaurants and jazz clubs flourished. "The Avenue," as it was known, was a major attraction in Upton, a neighborhood trying to make a comeback after years of decline.

"It is a tremendous honor for me to live in Upton, where I can see the historic buildings and learn of the great men and women such as ... Thurgood Marshall who once walked these same streets," said Teresa Stephens, president of the Upton Planning Committee, in a prepared statement.

The commission will be co-chaired by William Pencek Jr., director of heritage and cultural tourism with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, and Larry Gibson, a well-known city political figure and counsel with Shapiro Sher Guinot & Sandler.

Gibson said the commission is searching for ideas to make the best use of P.S. 103.

"We don't know what will come out of it," he said, adding: "It is a labor of love for which we will succeed."

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Credit: Sun reporter

### Illustration

Photo(s); Caption: City officials announce the creation of a panel to renovate P.S. 103 on Division Street. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall attended the school from 1914 to 1920.

## DETAILS

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