



Here's Why Meridian Hill Park Should Be Renamed...

Posted by [Dan Fecht](#) / 29 May 2017

Meridian Hill Park has long been situated in the neighborhood of Columbia Heights, which also borders the locality of Adams Morgan. Its been symbolic to DC locals for over a hundred years, as the statues peer over you and the trees shade your stroll, all the while the cascading tiered waterfall reminds you of sightseeing in age-old European cities. But there is more to be said about this ubiquitously loved park than just any surface conversation.

The park is also unofficially know as Malcolm X Park, which has caused much uproar between residents for many years. Even though a proposal came before congress in 1968 to change the name to Malcolm X Park, and ultimately not passing, we still need to realize the importance of why this is the right time to reconsider everything. Its quite apparent that much can be accomplished through societal relativity and word of mouth. Our everyday influence in the words that we speak are more powerful than any law chiseled and mandated into stone. Under federal regulations, however, the name of Meridian Park cannot be officially adopted to Malcolm X Park because a memorial for President James Buchanan stands within the confines of the park.

Consider Malcolm Xs life after returning home from his pilgrimage to Mecca; It was a radical change of heart and existence after witnessing the beauty of Muslims of all colors, blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans, coming together as equals, helping him to see Islam as a way to overcome racial problems. Though regretful of his mentality tied to his earlier days, he had now dedicated the short time that he had left to furthering such an agenda of love and grace and acceptance of all.

When we take into account the location of the park, it is far from easy to ignore the diversity factor of the city within a one mile radius. Even so to this day, for more than 40 years, a drum circle at the park culminates every Sunday during the warmer months to celebrate black liberty. Word even has it that on the day that Malcolm X was assassinated, a man started the drumming at Meridian Hill Park to vent off his frustrations, which afforded the locals new awareness and inspiration at the same time. As the years have gone by and the faces that have visited the park have come and gone, the drum circle has become more all-encompassing for people of all creeds and colors to join in freely. Its no longer questionable for a neighboring local resident that is not of African-American descent to stroll into the park and spend a little bit of time observing the emotionally-charged percussion circle. The beauty of that music still thrives in open air as it taps into the decades-old artistic connective energy, that of which initiated this drum circle in the first place and has a place in the hearts and thoughts of many DC residents.

In a city that labels itself as a hub for cultural understanding and advocacy, it serves to question if Malcolm X Park should truly have another chance to be revisited, almost fifty years later, to become officially designated as such. Yes, the hurdles are difficult and many, but the significance of an accomplishment of this caliber would be wide-spread, leading many that are currently unaware of the park and its traditions to want to learn more and share experiences there with friends and loved ones. Some might argue that this would be nothing more than a happening at the local level, and they might be right; but we cannot disregard the power of societal outreach to the world via social media, either.

As a matter of fact, in an American effort to hold the hand of a brother or sister from an opposite creed, race, or culture, we would be hard pressed to find a reason why we would even have the thoughts of putting such a potentially beautiful matter on the back burner for any longer. The time is now. All signs point to right here.. Being within the beauty of variance is this very moment we are living in.

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