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Asbury Park African American Music Heritage Project Receives Award from NJ Historical Commission Ongoing Project Also Receives Recognition from NJ Secretary of State

4/3/18 Asbury Park – The Asbury Park African American Music Heritage Project was presented the 2018 Giles R. Wright Award by the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC). The award, which is given annually to a grant in African American History, recognizes an outstanding project that explores the experience of African Americans in New Jersey. The project was also recognized by Tahesha Way, Acting Secretary of the State of New Jersey, for outstanding contributions in documenting and preserving cultural heritage important to the State of New Jersey.

The Asbury Park African American Music Heritage project commenced in August 2017 when the Board of Trustees of the Asbury Park Public Library received a \$15,000 grant from NJHC to fund a community-driven project that aims to shine a light on Asbury Park’s African American music heritage, specifically on the history of Springwood Avenue. In conjunction with partners such as the City of Asbury Park, AP Historical Society, and the Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music, the project will create accessible resources that document Asbury Park’s African American music heritage for the City and give voice to the stories of the African American community.

“Springwood Avenue was once the center of the African American music community and was lined with official and unofficial music venues. To be able, for example, to document the experiences of 3 remarkable local legends—Dee Holland, Cliff Johnson and Al Griffin who all had extraordinary careers that intersected on Springwood Avenue since the 1940s—is a remarkable achievement for the project. It’s important to preserve the rich histories and remarkable stories of these musicians to help inspire future generations.” said City Councilwoman Yvonne Clayton.

The ongoing Asbury Park African American Music Heritage Project continues to develop written and oral histories capturing the heritage of Springwood Avenue. To view a sample of the Asbury Park African American Music Heritage Project: Dee, Cliff & Al Tribute, visit: <https://youtu.be/Yq1ydiPk4zE>.

The Asbury Park Public Library, founded in 1878, has a mission to provide quality, cost-effective services, and lifelong learning opportunities, through books and a variety of other formats, to meet the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs and interests of its diverse population. For more information, visit the library at 500 1st Avenue, Asbury Park, NJ or visit www.asburyparklibrary.org.

For more information on the City of Asbury Park, visit www.cityofasburypark.com.