



Duke Ellington

school of the arts

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A Week of Events—and D.C. Coin—Commemorate Duke Ellington

Washington, D.C. – This morning, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) kicked off Duke Ellington Week activities with a celebration of D.C.'s new quarter that features DC's own Duke Ellington at his piano on at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, where the African American Museum, temporarily housed there, has mounted the Scurlock Exhibition of photographs of Black Washingtonians, including Ellington.

Ellington Week activities will continue tomorrow, Feb. 25, at THEARC, with a "Celebration of Black History Month, the Arts, and the Duke Ellington Commemorative Quarter," featuring Edward and April Ellington, Duke Ellington's children; the Duke Ellington School of the Arts School jazz orchestra, and the Washington Ballet, and later tomorrow, a concert, "Sophisticated Lady: An Evening with Denyce Graves," at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to raise funds for the Ellington School of the Arts, the soprano's alma mater.

"D.C.'s coin deserves a week-long celebration," Norton said. Ellington is the first prominent African American featured on a U.S. coin in circulation. "With Duke on the coin, we are sending an important message to the world that D.C. is a lot more than a government town. This week, in one fell swoop, we will celebrate our quarter, Black History Month, and the fabulous new exhibit of the brilliant photographic works of the Scurlock family, which captured 20th Century Black D.C. for posterity, from everyday people to the high, the mighty and the talented, including The Duke, whose picture is featured in the Scurlock exhibit."

The public selected Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, who was born and raised in the District, and who helped establish the entertainment corridor on U Street, a major venue for African American entertainers. Although D.C. wanted "Taxation without Representation" on the coin, the Mint declined the slogan and, instead, agreed to the District's motto, "Justice for All."

Getting D.C. a coin like other states was part of the Congresswoman's "Free and Equal D.C. Series" of bills, which includes the D.C. House Voting Rights Act, to bring District residents the same rights and privileges enjoyed by all Americans. Norton worked seven years to get a quarter for D.C., which was not included in the original 50 state series. The coin celebration Tuesday will coincide with a vote on the D.C. House Voting Rights Act in the Senate, and the expected mark-up of the bill in the House that same week. The U.S. Senate is where the bill fell three votes shy of the 60 needed to pass during the last session, but new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate and continued Republican support have made passage likely in this session.

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DETAILS FOR THIS WEEK'S COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS:

What: "Celebration of Black History Month, the Arts, and the Duke Ellington Commemorative Quarter" featuring Edward and April Ellington, Duke Ellington's children, the Ellington jazz band, and the Washington Ballet, and comments by Congresswoman Norton.

When: Wed., Feb. 25, 11 a.m.

Where: THE ARC, 1901 Mississippi Ave., SE

What: Sophisticated Lady: An Evening with Denyce Graves (benefiting the Duke Ellington School of the Arts)

When: Wed., Feb. 25, 8 p.m.

Where: John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Concert Hall, 2700 F Street, NW

What: Watch with Congresswoman Norton, D.C. Council Chair Vincent Gray, April and Edward Ellington: First availability of the commemorative quarter to the public

When: Thurs., Feb. 26, 10 a.m.

Where: Industrial Bank Historic U Street Location, 2000 11th Street, NW (quarters will be available to the public at all Industrial Bank locations on Friday, February 27.)

Duke Ellington School of the Arts is an accredited college preparatory public school of the District of Columbia offering pre-professional training in dance, instrumental music, literary media, museum studies, theater, technical design and production, visual arts, and vocal music. Ellington offers students an educational experience that combines both academic studies and artistic development. Our vision is to meet the needs of talented students who are considering careers in the arts by providing intensive arts instruction of the highest quality and strong academic curriculum and to prepare students for post-secondary education and/or pre-professional careers. Ellington's unique partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The George Washington University, and DCPS provides significant opportunities to the students, faculty and staff.

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