

ILLINOIS COMMISSION • New York WORLD'S FAIR 1964 • 1965

6 April 1964

Room 533 • 160 North La Salle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Area Code 312 • 346-2000 • Ext. 897

Mr. Ishmael Flory, Director
African-American Heritage Association
306 East 43rd Street, Suite 15
Chicago, Illinois 60615

Dear Mr. Flory:

Your letter of 31 March, addressed to Governor Kerner, with copies to members of the Illinois Commission for the New York World's Fair and other persons, is at hand.

I am very happy to have an opportunity to reply to it, and to answer the questions you raise in your communication.

In planning the Illinois Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, a great deal of thought was given, and extreme care exercised, to see that full justice was extended to all those who made outstanding contributions to the growth and development of Illinois. Needless to say, in the limited space available, it was found impossible to present all those -- whatever their race or ethnic origin -- who have valid claim to recognition.

We have been particularly diligent to make certain that the contributions of some of the great Negro leaders in Illinois have been noted.

In keeping with this determination on our part, we have included, in our presentation of "Illinois Firsts", Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, the distinguished Negro surgeon who pioneered successfully on the living human heart. We have paid tribute to Gwendolyn Brooks, the first Negro woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

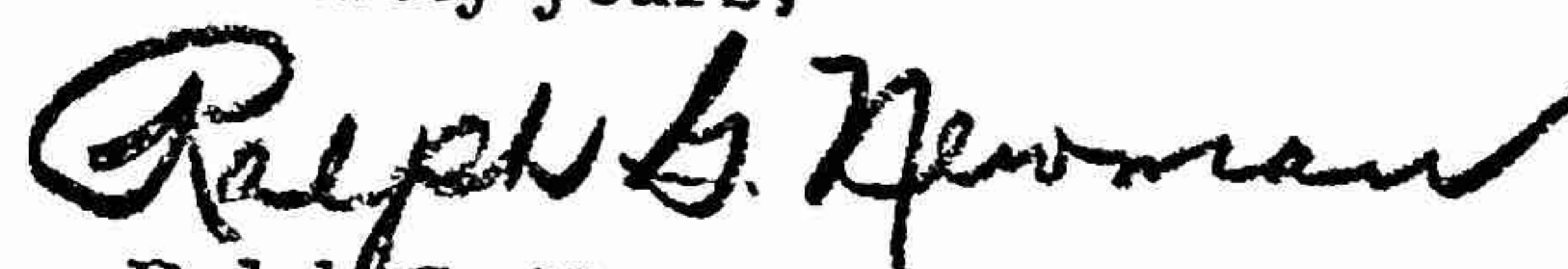
In "A Who's-Who Gallery of Some Distinguished Illinoisans", we have included Oscar De Priest, first Negro congressman since reconstruction days.

At the entrance to our pavilion, a series of panels sets the keynote for the entire exhibit. Each of these treats of the emphasis which we feel should be drawn to the paramount need in our time for full recognition of human and civil rights. Negroes are presented in each of these. In fact, each of these panels is centered on the Negro's right to full expression, and each is captioned with an appropriate quotation from Abraham Lincoln, pertinent to the point. Very likely, we are the only exhibit in the New York World's Fair to show an awareness of this major national problem.

With specific reference to the absence of Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable from this exhibit, it should be noted that this is an exhibit representing the State of Illinois as a whole, designed to have appeal for the entire nation and the whole world. The merits of DuSable are well recognized in Chicago, but his state and national significance is limited. Had the City of Chicago seen fit to submit an exhibit of its own, DuSable would reasonably have had a prominent place in it, but in our limited area we had, of necessity, to limit the scope of our exhibit.

In all of our activities, we have been meticulous in our efforts to obtain employees without any preference to race, color or creed, in whatever area competent personnel has been available.

Sincerely yours,



Ralph G. Newman
Chairman

RGN:fhw

P. S. A copy of this letter is being sent to all of the people who received your letter of 31 March.