

Q WILLIAMS



Kentucky Derby

DAY PARTY FUNDRAISER

MAY 2, 2026



With Gratitude

To everyone joining us tonight—thank you. Your presence, your support, and your belief in this work mean more than we can fully express. This event exists because of the people who showed up, offered their support, and helped move this work forward.

We want to offer special recognition to the Middletown community, whose continued support has carried this effort along the way.

To our fiscal sponsor, Oddfellows Playhouse, thank you for opening doors, creating space, and helping make this possible. And to Dic Wheeler, thank you for your steady guidance and belief from the very beginning.

We are deeply grateful to Cynthia Clegg and Michele Rulnick for your insight, encouragement, and continued support, and to State Representative Kai Belton for your dedication to honoring Q's legacy.

To Queen Williams—the matriarch who inspired so much of Q's vision and steadfastness—your strength, love, and unwavering presence are at the heart of all of this.

And to the men of the Beta Sigma Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc., thank you for graciously supporting this transition during this important moment.

Because of every one of you, this work continues with purpose and possibility.

Thank you for being part of our story.

THE
QUENTIN WILLIAMS
FOUNDATION



A Lasting Legacy

The Quentin "Q" Williams Foundation honors the enduring legacy of Quentin "Q" Soldier Williams by advancing the values he championed in life. We support initiatives that improve access to quality education, advocate for fair and affordable housing, promote community-centered justice, and foster healthy, thriving neighborhoods. Guided by Q's unwavering belief in dignity for all, we work to remove barriers to opportunity and create pathways that empower individuals and strengthen communities.

The Foundation is operating under the fiscal sponsorship of Oddfellows Playhouse, the nationally recognized Middletown youth arts organization that Q proudly supported for its mission to empower young people through the arts.

Event Program

Welcome

We will briefly gather to kick off the evening and share a few opening remarks.

The Main Event

Join us as we watch the Kentucky Derby race together.

Door Prize Drawings

Winners will be announced throughout the evening. Be sure to listen for your number.

50/50 Drawing

One lucky guest will take home half the pot, while the other half supports The Q Foundation!

Acknowledgements & Thanks

We will take a moment to recognize those who have supported this effort and helped make the night possible.

Guests are invited to enjoy the evening at their own pace, mixing, mingling, and enjoying food throughout the event.

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Their continued support reflects a shared commitment to community, connection, and creating opportunities that bring people together.

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We're grateful for the support of our community sponsors, whose work strengthens and uplifts Middletown every day. Their partnership makes this event possible and helps build a more connected community.

Black History, the Kentucky Derby, and Community Legacy

From the earliest days of the Kentucky Derby, Black horsemen shaped the sport—riding, training, and caring for the horses that made the race legendary. In the late 19th century, Black jockeys dominated the track, winning nearly half of the earliest Derby races and earning national acclaim for their skill and professionalism. Yet, as Jim Crow laws and segregation intensified in the early 20th century, systemic racism pushed Black jockeys, trainers, and stable workers out of the industry, erasing many of their contributions from public memory.

Despite this exclusion, Black communities carried forward the spirit of the Derby. Derby-themed gatherings, fashion competitions, and charity events became vibrant traditions in churches, civic organizations, fraternities and sororities, and neighborhoods across the country. These celebrations blended elegance, music, food, and philanthropy—transforming the Derby into a symbol of Black joy, excellence, and community investment.

Today, Derby-inspired events represent both remembrance and reclamation. They honor the Black pioneers who built the sport while using tradition as a platform for scholarships, youth development, and community empowerment. The Q Williams Kentucky Derby Day Party continues this legacy—celebrating culture, connection, and collective impact in honor of Quentin “Q” Williams.

Black jockeys were among the most skilled and sought-after riders in the late 19th century.

15 of the first 28 Kentucky Derby races were won by Black jockeys.

1875

Oliver Lewis, a Black jockey, wins the inaugural Kentucky Derby aboard Aristides.



Walker's actual 1877 prize ribbon.



1877

A son of slaves, William Walker rode Baden-Baden to victory in the 1877 Kentucky Derby at age 17.

1884

Isaac Murphy wins the Kentucky Derby and goes on to win two more times (1890 & 1891), becoming one of the most successful jockeys in American history.



1892

Alonzo "Lonnie" Clayton wins the Derby at age 15, one of the youngest winners ever.

Darktown Races: A racist characterization of black jockeys was printed by Currier and Ives in 1892.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



1998

In 1998, Ansel Williamson was posthumously inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame, honoring the Black trainer behind Aristides and a foundational figure in early American racing. Born into slavery, Williamson's career reflects the often-overlooked role Black horsemen played in building the sport.



1990s-2000s

Derby Cruising emerged as a defining Black Derby tradition in West Louisville, transforming West Broadway into a celebration of style, music, and community.

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2023

In 2023, the Beta Sigma Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. renamed its Annual Kentucky Derby Day Party in honor of Quentin "Q" Williams, recognizing his leadership in helping grow the event into a signature fundraiser supporting scholarships and youth development.



2026

In 2026, the newly incorporated Quentin "Q" Williams Foundation assumed the Derby Party, carrying forward a tradition

Q helped build—one first conceived as a house party grounded in celebration, style, and the power of bringing people together.

Black Kentucky Derby-Winning Jockeys



Oliver Lewis (1875)



William "Billy" Walker (1877)



George Garrett Lewis (1880)



Babe Hurd (1882)



Isaac Murphy (1884, 1890, 1891)



Erskine "Babe" Henderson (1885)



Isaac Lewis (1887)



Alonzo "Lonnie" Clayton (1892)



James "Soup" Perkins (1895)



Willie Simms (1896, 1898)



Jimmy Boland (1900)



Jimmy Winkfield (1901, 1902)



Harold "Hal" Booker (1903)

This historical information was compiled from the Kentucky Derby Museum, Kentucky Horse Park, the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame, Smithsonian Magazine, archival reporting, and materials from local and regional historical sources, including Louisville fair housing archives, the Filson Historical Society, and sources documenting Black Derby traditions, including Derby Cruising.

We'll see you next year for the

Q WILLIAMS



Kentucky Derby

DAY PARTY FUNDRAISER

MAY 1, 2027

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