



**FALL RIVER**  
MASSACHUSETTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

Contact: Olivia Peixoto  
508-324-2600

## **Lewis Latimer Fellowship Program to Host Memorial Event in Fall River**

**(FALL RIVER, MA- SEPTEMBER 19, 2023)**- The City of Fall River is honored to announce that **the Lewis Latimer Memorial Program will take place in Oak Grove Cemetery on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** This commemorative event will be hosted by the Lewis Latimer Fellowship Program which is an organization dedicated to providing special access and mentorship to a select group of exceptional Black innovators.

This celebratory occasion is a reminder of the legacy of Lewis Latimer as his scientific contributions have often gone unrecognized. **Members of the public, elected officials, Latimer Fellows, and special guests are invited to attend this honorary event to witness an important moment in history as Latimer’s life accomplishments will be celebrated through an unveiling of his unmarked resting place in Fall River.** Following the unveiling, Mayor Paul Coogan will deliver a proclamation recognizing September 23, 2023 as “Lewis H. Latimer Day.” The Brian Bigelow Jazz Band will also be in attendance delivering a live performance.

Lewis H. Latimer was a remarkable inventor and engineer whose inventions have played a pivotal role in modern society. After his parents escaped slavery via the Underground Railroad to Boston, he overcame numerous obstacles and, ultimately, worked alongside Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell. In 1876, Latimer produced the blueprints of the first telephone by Bell. He also contributed a groundbreaking contribution to Edison’s lightbulb invention, by improving the carbon filament inside light bulbs making them practical and accessible to the public.

Latimer's ties to Fall River come from his wife, Mary Lewis, who married Latimer on November 15, 1873 at her family home on Robeson and Bedford streets. The couple lived in New York for a majority of their lives, however, when Mary passed away in 1925, she returned to Fall River to be buried in Oak Grove Cemetery. Lewis Latimer's burial followed Mary's in 1928.

Founded in April of 2021 by Frank Bonafilia, Dr. Carmichael Roberts, and Jonathan Cropper, the Lewis Latimer Fellowship Program is a globally recognized annual competition that fosters innovation by providing the selected Fellows with resources to build profitable new ideas and inspire others. For more information on this program, please visit <https://www.latimerfellows.com/>.

The memorial ceremony will be attended by various Latimer Fellows, including those in the 2023 and 2022 cohorts. Attending Latimer Fellows include:

- Lisa Dyson, Ph.D., Founder & CEO at Air Protein (2023 cohort)
- D. Fox Harrell, Ph.D., Professor of Digital Media & Artificial Intelligence at MIT (2023 cohort)
  - Jacquelle Amankonah Horton, Founder & CEO at Fave (2023 cohort)
  - Shameik Moore, Actor, Musician and Innovator (2023 cohort)
  - Ian Randall, Co-Founder, President and CEO at Maglev Aero, Inc. (2023 cohort)
  - Soton Rosanwo, Founder & CEO at Centinel (2023 cohort)
- Audrey Bowden, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Electrical and Computer Engineering at Vanderbilt University (2022 cohort)
- Rayvon Fouché, Author, Professor, and Historian (2022 cohort)
- Asegun Henry, Ph.D., Professor in Mechanical Engineering at MIT (2022 cohort)
- Byron Jones, Cornerback for the Miami Dolphins (2022 cohort)

Please be advised that this event is rain or shine. There will be tents in place and chairs provided. The memorial ceremony will take place at the gravesite along the south edge of Oak Grove Cemetery overlooking Locust Street. There will be a shuttle bus at the main entrance of the Cemetery on 765 Prospect St. bringing attendees to the unveiling site. For any further questions, please contact Olivia Peixoto, special projects and media coordinator for the City of Fall River at 508-324-2600 or [opeixoto@fallriverma.org](mailto:opeixoto@fallriverma.org).

One Government Center ● Fall River, MA 02722 ● Tel (508) 324-2600

Fax (508) 324-2626  Email: [opeixoto@fallriverma.org](mailto:opeixoto@fallriverma.org)