

News Release

Chicken Dinner in Honor of Charles “Yardbird” Parker

In conjunction with the Fifth Annual Charlie Parker™ Celebration

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The Celebration of "Bird" in Kansas City Continues with ongoing collaboration between Kansas City Jazz ALIVE and the Bruce R Watkins Cultural Heritage Center.

What: *Chicken Dinner in Honor of Kansas City Music Genius Charles “Yardbird” Parker*

When: August 18, 2018 | 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Where: Bruce R Watkins Cultural Heritage Center | 3700 Blue Pkwy, Kansas City, MO

RSVP/ Info: BRWCHC at 816-513-0700

The 5th Annual Kansas City Charlie Parker Celebration will again explore and recognize the legacy of one of the most influential saxophonists and jazz icons to ever perform. The Celebration, a comprehensive Charlie Parker tribute, is recognized as the largest celebration of its kind in the world.

Parker was born in 1920 in Kansas City, Kan., and moved in 1927 to Kansas City, Mo. -- where jazz was flourishing, and the city was one of several ports instrumental in ushering in the musical improvisation style of Bebop, which Parker is identified with.

The 2018 Charlie Parker Celebration includes a mix of jazz venue showcase performances throughout the city as well as education, public programs and special events.

In collaboration with the Bruce R Watkins Cultural Heritage Center, this year’s celebration will include a special Chicken dinner, provide patrons an opportunity to view its Charlie Parker exhibit from the Sonny Gibson Collection, listen to a special jazz performance featuring the **Elderstatesmen of Kansas City Jazz, Little Big Band** and hear words of wisdom by jazz historian **Sonny Gibson**. Mr. Gibson’s talk, entitled *Personal Perspectives of Bird: The man and his music* will illuminate his personal reflections of the iconic Kansas City jazz native and share the great work of celebrated jazz artist Eddie Baker.

This annual dinner was created by the late Eddie Baker, founder of the Charlie Parker Memorial Foundation. The Charlie Parker Exhibit consists of more than 15 portrait pictures and historical documents highlighting Charlie Parker’s life. The exhibit will be on display in the Center’s Grand Hall space. The event is free and open to the public.

To RSVP and learn more about the event, [visit www.charlieparkercelebration.com](http://www.charlieparkercelebration.com) or contact the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center at 816-513-0700. Due to limited seating, patrons are encouraged to RSVP by August 8th.

*Charles Parker™ is a trademark of the Estate of Charles C. Parker, Jr.

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MORE ABOUT PARKER...

Parker's early music lessons... occurred in the KC public schools. He began playing alto sax at age 13 and worked occasionally with semi-professional groups before leaving school at age 15 and becoming a full-time musician. For the next four years he would perform primarily in KC with a variety of local blues and jazz groups. His craft was developed mostly through practical experience and listening to older jazz performers. He began traveling to other cities in the late 1930s. He joined Jay McShann's band, began touring, performed solo in many of McShann's recordings and soon prominence followed.

As part of the Charlie Parker Celebration, organizers have assembled a series of events that offer performance, education and of course, tributes. Visit www.charlieparkercelebration.com for more details and a complete listing of the 2018 Charlie Parker Celebration.

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Meet The Speaker...



Elvis "Sonny" Gibson

Elvis "Sonny" Gibson is a lifelong Kansas City resident and historian, and the proud author of four books including his most recent books "1865: Kansas City Early Negro History" and "Kansas City, Mecca of the New Negro", which outlines the early African American experience in Kansas City. His research work has been more than a 25-year effort to unearth Kansas City's African American past which has gone unrecorded and is seemingly unknown. Mr. Gibson has worked in the community for several years and is the owner of the Charlie Parker Exhibit Collection which features portrait pictures and historical documents highlighting Charlie Parker's life. He also serves as an Executive Board Member on the Friends of Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center Board and is heavily involved with the Eggs & Enlightenment forum.

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The Charlie Parker Celebration is presented by **Kansas City Jazz Alive**. The mission of KC Jazz Alive is to build awareness, serve as a listening body, provide a platform for integrating ideas, function as a voice, provide exposure to resources, and unite the Kansas City jazz community. As a catalyst organization - supporting artists, enthusiasts and venue owners, we strive to "raise the tide that lifts all jazz boats."

Visit www.kcjazzalive.org | www.charlieparkercelebration.com



The **Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center** is named in honor of a political and social activist, and leader who was born in Parkville, Missouri in 1924. The Center opened in 1989 and is dedicated to Mr. Watkins' legacy by honoring Kansas City's early African American pioneers, to interpret, celebrate, and promote the artistic, cultural, and social history of the African-American experience. The Friends of Bruce R. Watkins provide support and guidance for the Center and own the collection of historical materials.

This event is supported by these generous sponsors:



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