



Discovery News

Summer—2023

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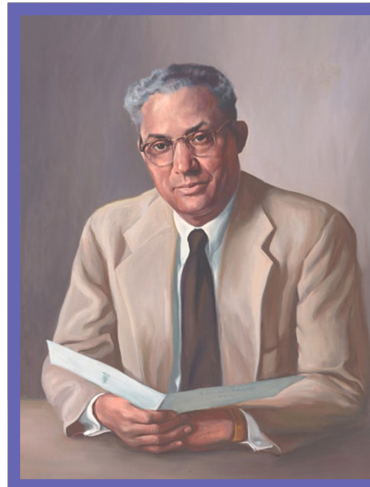
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From the Director's desk...

As we continue to create a regional destination park for all to enjoy at Dr. Lawless International Dark Sky Park and Michigan Dark Sky Preserve, I wanted to take a moment to honor the man behind the name. Few men in the history of our nation were more dedicated to the welfare of others as the late Dr. Theodore Kenneth Lawless. Following a long and distinguished career of healing skin diseases, he set forth to repay those institutions, who even in an indirect sense, aided in his career success.

Born on December 6, 1892, in Thibodaux, Louisiana, Dr. Lawless graduated from Talladega College in Alabama. Following preliminary medical studies at the University of Kansas, he earned a medical degree in 1919 from the Northwestern School of Medicine. Never content with his considerable expertise, he later studied dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, St. Louis Hospital in Paris, Kaiser Joseph Hospital in Vienna, and at Harvard Pathology Institute in Freiberg.



Upon returning to the United States, Dr. Lawless settled in Chicago to establish a private practice while serving as an instructor in medicine at Northwestern University from 1924-41. He was one of the first physicians to use radium in the treatment of skin cancers and other diseases, and in 1929 he won the Harmon Medical Award for his exemplary work.

Dr. Lawless was a rare individual, completely devoid of selfishness, whose goal in life was to advance as many causes and institutions as his resources would allow. In addition to endowments to his Alma Mater, Talladega College, he established a library at Prairie View A&M College in Texas to study the history and artistry of American Blacks. He financed the construction of numerous homes for the poor in Chicago, as well as the dermatology department at Bellinson Hospital in Jeru-

salem. He was a member of the Cook County Prison Welfare Commission, the Chicago Board of Health and the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee. He was a trustee of various Black colleges and a member of the Board of the Home Missions of the Congregationalist Christian Churches. (*State of Michigan, 1974, Special Tribute*)

As an instructor and researcher, Dr. Lawless made several contributions to the field of dermatology. His research was published in publications as the American Journal of Dermatology, Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine and the Journal of the American Medical Association. He worked to find the cures for leprosy and syphilis and was noted for his equal treatment of patients regardless of class or race.

As a shrewd businessman, Dr. Lawless became the director of the Supreme Life Insurance Company, and the Marina City Bank charter member, president and associate founder of Service Federal Savings and Loan Association in Chicago. He received honorary degrees from Talladega College, Howard University, Bethune-Cookman College, Virginia State University and the

University of Illinois. Among his prestigious honors were the NAACP Spingarn Medal for 1954, and the Golden Torch Award of the City of Hope. (*The African American Registry*)

As a frequent visitor to Cass County, Dr. Lawless often expressed his fondness for the area and especially the people who lived there. He often confided to close friends of his dream to make a portion of his property near Vandalia, a park for all to enjoy without prejudice. Today, Dr. T.K. Lawless County Park represents the fulfillment of that dream. We proudly honor his name, his life, and ideals.

See you in our parks.....

Scott Wyman

Cass County Parks and Recreation Director