



# The Daily Free Press

The Independent Student Newspaper at Boston University

 MENU



CITY, NEWS

## MBTA's Dudley Station to become Nubian Station

February 20, 2020 9:08 pm

by Angela Yang

**D**udley Station in Roxbury will soon be Nubian Station, two months after nearby Dudley Square underwent the same identity change.

For years the primary commercial center of Roxbury — a majority-black neighborhood — bore the name of Thomas Dudley, a colonial Massachusetts governor who enabled slavery. Now, with two out of three landmarks stripped of Dudley's name, advocates are pushing to check off Dudley Square Library as well.

The station and square are renamed after the Nubia Empire, which dominated northeast Africa in ancient times. Boston's black community makes up many of the kingdom's descendants, according to supporters of the name change.

The campaign to redefine the city's Dudley trifecta began around six years ago by the Black Community Information Center, which later founded the Nubian Square Coalition.

As governor, Dudley sponsored the passage of the "Body of Liberties" in 1641 which legalized slavery in the colony. His son Joseph Dudley later took the same office, and continued to enforce this legislation until the 18th century.



*The Dudley MBTA Station in Roxbury, named after colonial-era Gov. Thomas Dudley, will soon be known as Nubian Station in an effort to better reflect the surrounding community. COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS*

NSC chair and BCIC director Sadiki Kambon said selecting a new name for the area did not come easy, at first. Some had suggested names after Malcolm X while others proposed Harriet Tubman, but the coalition could not reach consensus.

“That’s why I went back out and did more research and came back with a suggestion that we use the name Nubian,” Kambon said. “We’re a Nubian people and whether you’re from Haiti or Harvard Street in Dorchester, you could relate to that name. So that’s how we, in fact, arrived to agreement to promote the name Nubian.”

Having attended college near the Dudley Station area, Carmen Dongo, 32, said she is aware of the change and in favor of it.

“I think that it’s definitely representative of the population that is there, and if anything, it would give a voice to those people,” the Roslindale resident said, “and [helps in] really understanding where does the name Dudley come from and why are we still honoring those traditions that aren’t serving us right now.”

The coalition gained the support of state Rep. Chynah Tyler, who filed a Massachusetts House bill last month to rename Dudley Station.

Tyler wrote in an email that various members of the NSC reached out to her office to request her help in advancing the group’s cause.

“I wanted to support the Nubian Square Coalition’s mission on moving away from the controversy that was associated with the name Dudley in regards to where it was located,” Tyler wrote. “The advocacy demanding the name change was an important factor.”

Kambon said he had presented before the Transportation Committee at the State House months ago and was planning to launch a follow-up campaign when the group received news last week that the MBTA had voted in favor of renaming Dudley Station.

“So we now have Nubian Square and Nubian Station, and our next step is to work on getting the name of the library to be named the Nubian Square Library,” he said.

Among the members of the NSC is the Black Economic Justice Institute, whose co-founder Priscilla Flint-Banks was born and raised behind what was formerly Dudley Square.

Flint-Banks said she would support renaming more locations and streets in Boston that pay tribute to slave owners, but that this would likely mean changing “just about every street” in the city.

“There were a lot of slave owners in Boston. People don’t realize it,” Flint-Banks said. “We have Ruggles and Jackson, Codman Square — I mean, the list goes on and on.”

East Boston resident Andrew Andrade said he supports efforts like these to rebrand the city and better represent sentiments of

current times.

“I think the name should be changed, especially if it’s something that’s definitely going to help reflect on the community that lives there now,” the 24-year-old resident said.

But what BEJI is concerned about, in addition to the neighborhood’s nominal identity, according to Banks, is its shifting economic development.

“I see the gentrification, I see the lack of jobs, I see the homelessness,” Flint-Banks said. “And Nubian Square, it’s a landmark. We want to make sure that black people and brown people have access and are able to live in Nubian Square.”

Maria Lombard, 24, of South Boston said although she is not very well-informed on Thomas Dudley’s history, she would like to see the removal of any name in the city associated with the promotion of slavery.

“I don’t know a whole lot about this situation,” Lombard said. “I have to go with the [name] that’s going to allow the descendants of Boston to represent the city of Boston.”



**Author: Angela Yang**

*Comments are closed.*

*What would you like to see The Daily Free Press cover? Let us know on our [tip line](#).*

## LATEST OPINION



OP-ED: American democracy isn't on the brink of collapse — it doesn't exist

2021 Breakdown: Actions must have consequences, especially for those at the top