

Humble, Texas 77396

July 31, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

When I tell my Texas friends that I am going to Calumet Day, they curiously ask "What is Calumet Day?" When I replay that Calumet Day is our neighborhood reunion, they appear astounded that a neighborhood could have a reunion. And when I try to explain to them what happens on Calumet Day, they still do not comprehend what I am describing. Several have asked me to make a video so they can see what I am talking about.

Needless to say, Calumet Day is a unique, worthwhile event. I have attended several times (1994, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2009, 2010, and 2013). I have seen it evolve from a local gathering to a global event. I actually flew directly from Tokyo, Japan to Chicago in 1999 and 2004 to attend Calumet Day. Each time I come, I renew acquaintances with people that I have not seen or talked to in 30, 40, or 50 years. As a native son of Calumet, these reunions are important to me because the village environment is resurrected for a few days in July. I spent all of my youthful, formative years in Calumet, going to school, church, and to Riley Park to play with the same group of people. Even though most of us who were raised in Calumet have scattered to the four corners of the world, Calumet Day gives us the means and opportunity to relive our common experiences.

Calumet Day is a celebration and tribute to village life. It not only is a reunion, but it also gives the current residents of Calumet the opportunity to experience what it means to be in a village. The sharing of food, fellowship, and space embodies the essence of the Calumet Day celebration. During my life in Calumet from 1946 to 1964, I knew that there were several people in every block of the village that not only knew me and my family, but they were also actively involved in my personal development from a boy into manhood. Calumet Day is a testimony that village raising produces productive citizens. From my 1964 graduating class at Roosevelt High School, Calumet produced college professors, school teachers, CPAs, architects, engineers, computer technologists, policemen, and supervisors in the local steel mills and refineries. Calumet Day is evidence that our village is a launching pad for successful, productive people. The Calumet community's vitality needs Calumet Day to continue to show that ordinary people can become extraordinary, successful, and productive citizens of this world.

I am already looking forward to being at the 20-year celebration in 2014.

Sincerely,

Maurice Watkins