

History of the Duluth Branch of the NAACP

The **Duluth Minnesota Branch** embodies the mission statement of the National NAACP by working to bring unity in our local communities. Over the past few years the Duluth chapter has achieved the following accomplishments:

Community Education

- Served on Education Equity Advisory Committee (EEAC)
- Instrumental in creating the position of “Integration Specialists” for the district.
- Participated on the committee to make Denfeld High School a Community School
- Sponsored events in the Twin Ports that elevate African Heritage culture and history: MLK weekend; Kwanzaa and Juneteenth.
- Served on the Steering Committee in the creation and stewardship of the Family Freedom Center at Community Action Duluth.

Public Health

- Involved with Health in All Policies to address unequal health outcomes in Duluth.
- Collaborated with UMD to conduct community surveys with the college of pharmacy; working on another grant with that.

Discrimination

- Addressed incidents of racism in our community - an effigy with a noose around the neck of President Obama on Miller Trunk Highway, and the display of a noose at Denfeld High School.
- Organized a community response to these incidents that included hosting a Youth Summit and a community forum at Community Action Duluth.
- Met with Duluth Mayor about Black Lives Matter Movement and addressed concerns about low-income housing

Criminal Justice

- Advocated with Duluth Task Force for Improved Community-Police Accountability to establish Duluth Citizen Review Board and continue efforts to hold the Community Relations Board accountable

The History of the NAACP, National, Regional, and Local

Founded Feb. 12, 1909, the NAACP is the nation’s oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. Its more than half-million members and supporters world-wide are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, campaigning for equal opportunity and conducting voter mobilization.

The NAACP was formed partly in response to the continuing lynchings and the 1908 race riot in Springfield. Appalled at the violence that was committed against blacks, a group of white liberals and seven African Americans, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Mary Church Terrell issued and signed a call to discuss racial justice.

In 1913 the St. Paul branch of the NAACP is founded, and the Minneapolis branch followed in 1914. The Twin Cities NAACP branches played what may have been their most urgent early role in the aftermath of racial violence 150 miles north, in Duluth. On June 15, 1920, a mob broke into the Duluth city jail and lynched three black circus workers who were held there as suspects in an alleged rape. In the days that followed, seven other black men were indicted in the rape. The NAACP branches in St. Paul and Minneapolis mobilized to defend them...[Their] efforts on behalf of the accused helped overcome skepticism about the NAACP in Duluth’s African American community and led to the establishment of that city’s NAACP branch in September, 1920.