



# The Branding Iron

DUARTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JAN-MAR 2026



## President's Message



## Happy New Year!

As I welcome in the New Year, I reflect upon our achievements at the Duarte Historical Museum and I am filled with excitement about what 2026 has in store.

Among the things I am grateful for this past year are the Docents. Your unfailing commitment and generous gift of your time makes the Duarte Museum a success.

To our membership: Thank you for being part of our Duarte Historical Museum community and for supporting us as we preserve the things that connect us to the past.

In 2025, there were several changes at the Duarte Museum.

The original BLVD. Cafe sign was returned home and is on display in the Route 66 Room.

The Red Car exhibit was updated by a donation of a section of an original Red Car railroad rail.

The bathroom was remodeled to meet ADA standards.

Eight of the filing cabinets in the storeroom were organized and systemized.

In the New Year, I wish you:

Health to enjoy each day in comfort

Peace within your heart

Wisdom to prioritize those things that really matter

Generosity that you may share all good things that come to you.

And most of all, I wish you happiness, joy, and blessings in the new year - the best of everything - that you so richly deserve!

**The Best Things in Life Are Free**

**Don't Be Too Busy to Notice Them.**

## A CENTURY OF BLACK HISTORY

THE ARTICLE BELOW, WRITTEN BY BARBARA GHOLAR, CHRONICLES THE BEGINNING OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND THE MONROVIA DUARTE BLACK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.



In 1926, Historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson established Negro History Week to ensure that the stories, achievements, and contributions of African Americans were recognized and preserved.

One hundred years later, Black History Month continues to serve as a vital celebration of resilience, leadership, and progress.

The 2026 theme, "**A Century of Black History Commemorations**," honors this enduring legacy. Dr. Woodson reminded us, *"Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history."*

The **Monrovia-Duarte Black Alumni Association (MDBAA)** is proud to partner with the Duarte Historical Museum in commemorating this historic milestone. Together, we uplift both national achievements and the powerful local history of Monrovia and Duarte—communities shaped by Black educators, civic leaders, faith institutions, and families who helped integrate schools, serve in public office, and build lasting community organizations.

Since 1992, MDBAA has honored this legacy by investing in the future through scholarships, educational programs, and youth engagement. As we celebrate 100 years of Black History Month, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving the past, educating the present, and inspiring the next generation.

This centennial year invites us all to reflect, learn, and move forward together—guided by history and strengthened by community.



**Monrovia-Duarte Black Alumni Association**

Honoring Legacy. Empowering the Next Generation.

<https://mdbaa.org/>

## Lots Happening at Duarte Museum

At the Speaker Series in November, Jim Lawler presented the Duarte Historical Museum with an original copy of *On The Duarte* by R. Aloysia Moore & Bernice Bozeman Watson. This book is the definitive resource for the early history of Duarte. We thank Jim and Royal Oaks very much for the addition of this rare book to our museum library.



Words spoken by Jim Lawler of the Royal Oaks Historical Society, during the presentation. "This past March, Royal Oaks was officially annexed into the City of Duarte, so all Royal Oaks residents are now proud citizens of Duarte. One of the interesting residents we have specializes in finding old and out of print books. He found a copy of *On The Duarte* in Indiana. So on behalf of Royal Oaks, we want to present the book to the Duarte Historical Museum."



On November 9, Scott Piotrowski, Past President, California Historic Route 66 Association, presented an in-depth look at Route 66 through California, highlighting the legendary highway path in the San Gabriel Valley.

In 2026, the Duarte Historical Museum will be closed:  
1/1-6, 4/4, 5/23, 7/1-7, 9/5,  
11/21-30, 12/19-31

## FREE MUSEUM SPEAKER SERIES

2026 is the 100th Anniversary of the Monrovia Duarte Black Alumni Assoc. For the past several years the Duarte Historical Museum has been privileged to partnered with MDBAA to present programs of interest to our community.

Please check the schedule below and join us for what promises to be an informative and interesting Speaker Series.

### 2026 Commemorative Events

• **Sunday, January 18, 2026 | 2:00–4:00 PM**

Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday

Panel Discussion - Duarte Historical Museum

• **Sunday, February 1, 2026 | 2:00–4:00 PM**

Black History Month Centennial Kickoff

Monrovia High School Film Screening:

**100 Years from Mississippi** — the story of Mamie Lang Kirkland

• **Sunday, March 22, 2026 | 2:00–4:00 PM**

Women's History Month

Duarte Historical Museum Film Screening:

**The Incomparable Jones Sisters** — honoring Dr. Sophia Jones and educator Anna H. Jones

Contact the Monrovia-Duarte Black Alumni

Association at <https://mdbaa.org/>



**Sunday, February 15, 2026 at 3:00PM**

Kelli Shapiro, PhD, public historian and historic preservationist, will speak on the topic "Transformation Theater Trends in So Cal's San Gabriel Valley and Inland Empire"

**Admission is FREE.**  
**Light refreshments will be served.**



## Route 66: The Road That Shaped America

Below is PART 1 of an article by Coco Heller aka Alan Heller about the history of Route 66. I know you will



enjoy it...

Few highways in America hold the same legendary status as Route 66. Known as the "Main Street of America" or the "Mother Road," this historic highway symbolized freedom, opportunity, and the spirit of adventure for much of the 20th century.

Though decommissioned as an official U.S. highway in 1985, its cultural influence endures, and it remains one of the most celebrated roads in the world.

The idea for Route 66 began in the early 1920s, when automobile ownership was rapidly increasing and Americans were eager for better roads to connect cities and towns.

Cyrus Avery, a businessman from Tulsa, Oklahoma, was one of the strongest advocates for a cross-country highway. He envisioned a route stretching from Chicago, Illinois, to Santa Monica, California, that would open up the American West to travelers and commerce.

In 1926, the federal government officially established U.S. Highway 66, running 2,448 miles across eight states: Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. The route was carefully chosen to link hundreds of rural communities, many of which had never before been connected to a major national roadway. This gave Route 66 a reputation as a "people's highway," serving everyday Americans rather than just big cities.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Route 66 became a lifeline for struggling families. As drought and dust storms ravaged farms in the Midwest, thousands of families packed their belongings and traveled west along the highway in search of work and a better life.

This migration was famously captured in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, where he referred to Route 66 as the "Mother Road." Small towns along the route benefited from the flow of travelers, as roadside diners, gas stations, and motels sprang up to serve weary drivers.

.... to be continued

## Andres Duarte Family Visits

One of the pleasures of being a docent at the Duarte Historical Museum is that you meet family members of Andres Duarte.

Recently, Olivia Martinez Ayala and her husband Raul Ayala visited the Duarte Historical Museum. Olivia's great, great, great, great grandmother was Andres Duarte's sister, Maria Antonia Duarte.

Olivia was born in Long Beach, but was raised by her grandmother in the Tijuana, Mexico area. She returned to California when she was 20 years old and met Raul. They have been married for 52 years and have two sons and five grandchildren.

They now live in Boulevard, California, a town 68 miles east of San Diego. Who knew that there was a town of that name? They were surprised and excited to see our "BLVD. Cafe" sign. It reminded them of home.



Olivia enjoyed seeing all the things that we had in the exhibit we have in the Citrus Room about her ancestor, Andres Duarte.

She learned that she was related to Andres Duarte when her son gave her the DNA Ancestry Registry as a gift.

Raul & Olivia Ayala  
pictured in front of  
A D Family Exhibit

## DID YOU KNOW?

**On the Duarte** is the definitive book about the early history of Duarte. Written by R. Aloysia Moore and Bernice Bozeman Watson in 1976, it was published by the City of Duarte for the American Bicentennial Celebration.

Part I begins with the Indian occupation of Duarte, ends with World War II, and was written by R. Aloysia Moore.

Part II, which begins in 1945 and ends in 1976, was written by Bernice Bozeman Watson.

Thank you to Jim Lawler who did the research and found that **On The Duarte** can be found online at the link below.

<https://www.cityofduarte.ca.gov/home/show/publisheddocument/1460/637777511360700000>

**JOIN DUARTE HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

Individual: \$20      Family: \$30

Lifetime Membership: \$500

Business/Organization: \$100

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT**

[www.RanchoDeDuarte.org](http://www.RanchoDeDuarte.org)

**OR MAIL A CHECK TO**

Duarte Historical Society  
P.O. Box 263, Duarte, CA 91009-0263

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Duarte Historical Society & Museum  
c/o Liz Reilly  
3204 Conata Street  
Duarte, CA 91010  
[RanchoDeDuarte.org](http://RanchoDeDuarte.org)



Duarte Historical Society & Museum  
777 Encanto Parkway, Duarte, CA, 91010

**Open: Wednesdays: 1-3 p.m.**

**Saturdays: 1-4 p.m.**

President: Liz Reilly

Vice President: Judy Ann Blake

Treasurer: Evette Arcaro

Secretary: Connie Ream

Director: Ellen Worley

Curator: Dilip Tiwari

Docent Coordinator: Judy Ann Blake

Exhibit Coordinator: Mark Montgomery

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