

# Welcome to

# DRED SCOTT PLAYFIELDS

On November 8, 1971, following a recommendation by the City's Parks and Recreation and Human Rights Commissions, the Bloomington City Council approved the naming of the City's largest playfield complex to honor the courage and contributions of Dred Scott in helping achieve rights for all, and to acknowledge his important place in the history of the State and Nation.

## LEGACY OF COURAGE AND FREEDOM: DRED AND HARRIET SCOTT

Dred and Harriet Scott were slaves who sued for their freedom in 1847, enduring a legal battle that ended on March 6, 1857, in one of the most infamous United States Supreme Court decisions in our history. The Scotts argued that their time spent living with their owners in free states and territories, including Fort Snelling, entitled them to emancipation. The Supreme Court disagreed. In *Scott v. Sandford*, the Supreme Court made the coldly racist finding that slaves were "articles of merchandise," and stated that Africans "imported as slaves" and "their descendants, whether they had become free or not," had been "regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race . . . ; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit." It held that Dred Scott was not a citizen of the United States and could not sue in federal court.

The Scotts lost the case, but the Supreme Court's repugnant effort to ensure that the federal government could neither prohibit states from allowing slavery, nor prohibit slavery in the territories, backfired. The decision enraged the anti-slavery movement, contributed to the start of the Civil War, and led to President Abraham Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. The Dred Scott decision was eventually repudiated by the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution.

Dred and Harriet Scott were voluntarily freed on May 26, 1857. Dred Scott died in 1858, but Harriet Scott lived to see the conclusion of the Civil War and the passage of the constitutional amendments.

Dred and Harriet Scott's courage helped shatter the unspeakable evil of slavery. Their legacy lives on in the freedom we enjoy today and as inspiration in the ongoing struggle for human rights.

