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NEWS

African American Museum welcomes World Cup visitors with Nelson Mandela exhibition

Visitors can walk through four galleries, each showcasing defining periods of Mandela's life.

By **Alyda Muela**, Staff Writer

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 Gift Article











Mandela: The Official Exhibition at the African American Museum at Fair Park in Dallas, Texas, Friday June 12, 2026.
Anja Schlein/The Dallas Morning News



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African American Museum welcomes World Cup visitors with Nelson Mandela exhibition

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“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair,” Nelson Mandela famously said at the 2000 Laureus World Sports Awards.

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Mandela, among the world's most recognizable and revered political leaders, is the focus of a new exhibit at the African American Museum, Dallas.



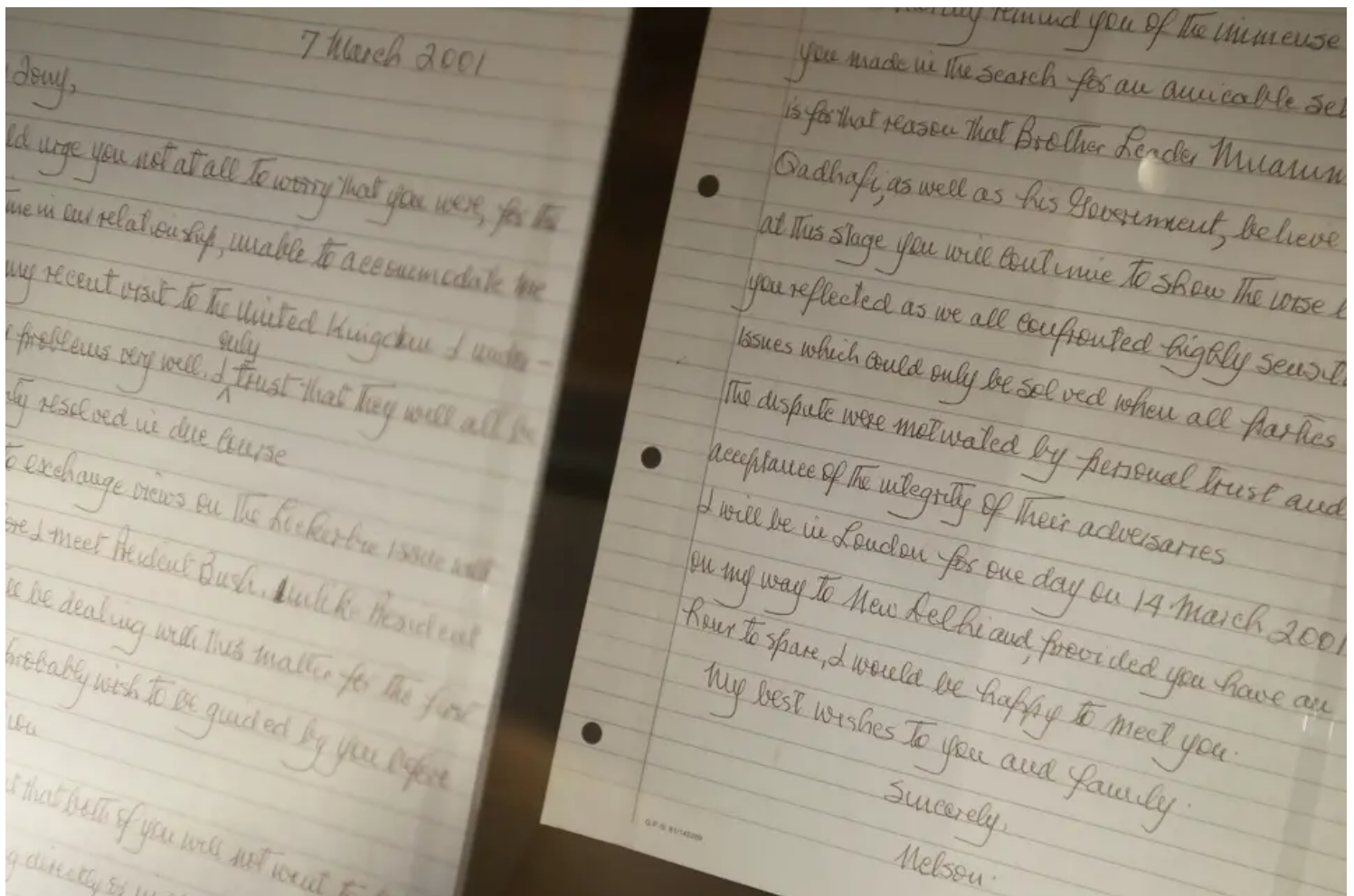
Dr. Marvin Dulaney, Historian-in-Residence, talks about the displays at Mandela: The Official Exhibition at the African American Museum at Fair Park in Dallas, Texas, Friday June 12, 2026.

Anja Schlein/The Dallas Morning News

Spanning the entire second floor of the museum and timed for the start of the World Cup in Dallas, visitors will encounter the Mandela they remember from history class alongside a more personal look at a man whose struggle for freedom played out on the world stage.

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Here, the letters he wrote his wife from the prison where he spent 27 years because he opposed the apartheid government. In another room, the suit he wore when he was inaugurated as South Africa's first Black president in 1994 and a replica of the Nobel Peace Prize he was awarded before his election.



A letter written by Nelson Mandela on display at Mandela: The Official Exhibition at the African American Museum at Fair Park in Dallas, Texas, Friday June 12, 2026.

Anja Schlein/The Dallas Morning News

Coinciding with the 2026 World Cup, the African American Museum, Dallas presents [Mandela: The Official Exhibition](#).

Visitors can walk through four galleries, each showcasing defining periods of Mandela's life — from his early years in the Eastern Cape, to his fight against apartheid, his 27-year incarceration and finally his role as South Africa's first democratically elected president.

Dallas is the fourth and final stop for this internationally acclaimed exhibit before the artifacts and archives are returned to the Royal House of Mandela in South Africa.

Lisa Brown Ross, president and CEO of the African American Museum, Dallas said she wants visitors to leave the exhibit understanding the power of courage.

"He was a principled leader, and in this day and age where we are searching for meaning, looking for the opportunity to be in community with other people, I would consider this the perfect storm."



A ceremonial headdress on display at Mandela: The Official Exhibition at the African American Museum at Fair Park in Dallas, Texas, Friday June 12, 2026

Anja Schlein/The Dallas Morning News

Ross explains that the decision to host the exhibition during the [World Cup](#) was a choice made to unite the community during a particularly divisive time in the U.S.

"He was seeking to ensure that people had basic human rights. And I think that when we fast forward 30, 40 years and look at some of the policies that are being instituted now, this is an opportunity to see that we can have dignity," she said. We can have freedom. We can have justice. And we can be resilient in this process."

The Mandela exhibit fills all four galleries on the museum's second floor. It is the first time in 30 years that the museum has taken down the Freedman's Cemetery exhibition, which explored a once-thriving North Dallas community.

Dr. W. Marvin Dulaney, Historian and Scholar-in-Residence at the museum, hopes the exhibit exposes tourists and residents to information and perspectives they may not encounter elsewhere.

"It's just little things like that that people can learn and take with them, and hopefully it becomes something that they embrace in their lives, and hopefully it'll change them and have them look at life and our culture and our country differently."



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Anja Schlein/The Dallas Morning News

In August, the museum will launch a series of educational programs at the start of the 2026-27 school year to introduce students and educators to Mandela as an “icon of liberation and peace” said Margie J. Reese, the museum’s chief programs officer, in a news release.

The exhibition will run from June 13 to Nov. 1. Located in historic Fair Park, the African American Museum, Dallas offers free admission. The museum is offering extended hours during the exhibition from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and closed Sunday and Monday.

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**Alyda Muela**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERN



Originally from El Paso, Alyda recently graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with a BA in multimedia journalism and a minor in general business. After working at her university's student publication, she interned for the local public radio station KTEP and Puente News Collaborative, a nonprofit news organization covering the U.S.-Mexico border.

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