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Cool Spring Downtown District Shares Origin Story of Zombie Walk
A Trio of Women Are Credited with Founding One of Downtown's Most Niche Events

Photos for Promotional Use:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fciycjde01s11zx/AAB8Y3fAdmZnIoqqVzqJGFzTa?dl=0>

Fayetteville, N.C. – The Cool Spring Downtown District (CSDD), in partnership with Back-A-Round-Records, is hosting downtown's 12th* Zombie Walk & Prom event on Fri., Oct. 28, 2022, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., as a part of its 4th Friday programming.

“While thousands of people attend the Zombie Walk & Prom downtown each year, we realize not many folks know the true origin story of how it came into being,” CSDD’s president and CEO Bianca Shoneman states, “and we thought it would be appropriate to share that interesting history with the public ahead of this year’s event.”

Three artists—Christina Cole, Kristi Howard, and Katrina Rubiera—came together in 2010 to plan something that had never been done before in Fayetteville, and that’s what the trio originally dubbed the “Zombie Walk/Jazz Funeral.”

As Howard and Rubiera shared with CSDD, Cole originally came up with the idea of organizing a jazz funeral to pay respects to her own mother after her death. Around the same time, these women learned several tombstones had been vandalized in downtown’s historic Cross Creek Cemetery, and they collectively decided to use the event as an opportunity to raise funds for building a sturdy fence around the cemetery.

After also learning zombie walks/proms had proven to be quite popular in other states, Cole, Howard, and Rubiera then combined their ideas and planned the inaugural Zombie Walk/Jazz Funeral for Oct. 22, 2010, in conjunction with downtown’s 4th Friday event.

Rubiera shared her own reflections on the trio’s decisions behind the event: “It could have been another missed opportunity for Fayetteville, because it was nontraditional. As a community, we often look to the past, tried and true, and shun new ideas. We saw this as an opportunity to move forward—bringing younger people downtown for a really good cause, not to mention being good stewards of our community.”

Howard and Rubiera also give credit to many other artists and volunteers for pooling their resources, talents, and funds to ensure the first event was a success. That long list includes people who printed posters, distributed donation cans to downtown businesses, face-painted, managed the crowd, photographed the festivities, and more.

Howard stated they had originally expected perhaps 50 people would attend, “but when we rounded the corner to the downtown library that night, we saw approximately 2,500 people patiently waiting for the event to kick off.”

Ultimately, despite the concerns, the inaugural event proved to be a success, and just like Cole, Howard, and Rubiera had envisioned, it was a family-friendly, peaceful event. These women were proud to turn in their donations, totaling \$800, the next day, helping to ensure Fayetteville’s most historic cemetery could be secured.

The rest is history, as they say, and what would eventually be dubbed the "Zombie Walk & Prom" was adopted by many downtown. Much to their credit, Cole, Howard, and Rubiera then turned over the entire event concept, allowing downtown and others to continue the tradition and profit off it.

As Shoneman expressed, “Our downtown wouldn’t have such a signature event for Halloween if it weren’t for three women who thought outside the box and cared about bringing a new tradition to our community, and I’m so grateful to them for being such innovators, leaving a legacy behind.”

This year’s Zombie Walk & Prom event will take place on Fri., Oct. 28, 2022. The Paul Mitchell School will be face-painting during the Zombie Pre-Party, with vendors, artists, performers, and more onsite. Live performances will then take place from Lotus Sun and the Living Dead and Nirvani, a Nirvana cover band. For more information, visit the Facebook [event](#).

The Zombie Walk and Prom is sponsored by Healy Wholesale, The Arts Council of Fayetteville and Cumberland County, The City of Fayetteville, ERA Strother, Metronet, and Keller Williams Real Estate.

Visitors to and residents of Cumberland County may follow CSDD’s efforts and announcements on their website at visitdowntownfayetteville.com, on Facebook at [@CoolSpringFAY.org](https://www.facebook.com/CoolSpringFAY.org) or [@downtownfayetteville](https://www.facebook.com/downtownfayetteville), or on Instagram at [@coolsspringdowntowndistrict](https://www.instagram.com/coolsspringdowntowndistrict) or [@downtownfay](https://www.instagram.com/downtownfay).

To learn more about a variety of sponsorship opportunities for CSDD’s projects and/or events, email info@coolsspringfay.org.

*This year would have marked the 13th annual Zombie Walk & Prom, but the pandemic prevented that event from happening in 2020. Thus, they are celebrating the 12th anniversary.

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The Cool Spring Downtown District, Inc. is a charitable, nonprofit corporation formed in 2017 to create and sustain an arts and entertainment district in downtown Fayetteville, N.C., positioning it as a vibrant center of artistic, cultural, civic and commercial activity. Learn more at visitdowntownfayetteville.com.

For all media inquiries and more information, contact Chief Executive Officer Bianca Shoneman at bianca@coolsspringfay.org or (910) 223-1089.