**City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor**

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

Mayor Mitchell, City Council and Community to Celebrate the Groundbreaking of "Tom Lopes Park"

Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 3:00 P.M. at the City-owned lot known as

One Washington Square (where County and South Sixth Streets meet)

New Bedford, Massachusetts- In June of 2015, in support of the family of Tom Lopes, Mayor Jon Mitchell formally proposed that New Bedford name a vacant City-owned parcel at One Washington Square, "Tom Lopes Park," to honor the first Cape-Verdean American elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, publisher of Cape Verdean News and longtime New Bedford neighborhood advocate and mentor.

The New Bedford City Council voted in support of the proposal and on Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 3:00 P.M., Mayor Jon Mitchell, members of the City Council, along with family and friends of Tom Lopes will gather at the city-owned lot at County and Sixth Streets for the ground breaking ceremony of Tom Lopes Park.

The Community Leadership Team of NeighborWorks has been working with Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE), local artist Erik Durant and others to design and build a memorial sculpture in honor of Tom Lopes. Fundraising is underway to support the memorial sculpture which will be sited in Tom Lopes Park.

"We honor Tom Lopes for many reasons, but primarily because he was a pioneer—a trailblazer, courageous, with eyes fixed on the horizon. The park and sculpture at a prominent gateway in our city will stand as a permanent reminder to present and future residents that one person can truly make a difference," said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

In July, a portrait of Tom Lopes was unveiled at the New Bedford Free Public Library. On Friday, October 30, at 6:00 p.m. the documentary film, *The Reel Tom Lopes,* will premiere at the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

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