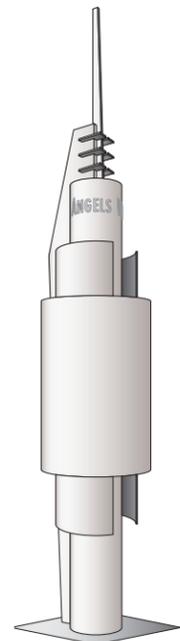


# Angels Walk Crenshaw Select Stanchions

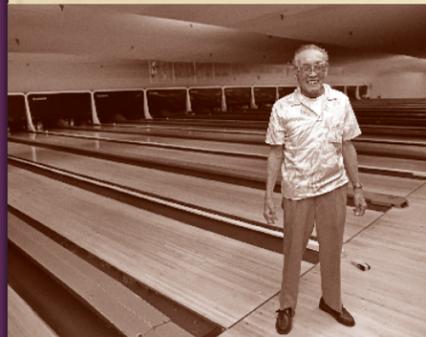
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# ANGELS WALK CRENSHAW



## HOLIDAY BOWL



Local bowler, "Juggie," says goodbye to the lanes where he bowled a perfect 300 game. The Holiday Bowl's last day of operation was Sunday, May 7, 2000.

### A PLACE FOR ALL

Opened in 1958 by a group of Japanese restaurateurs, the Holiday Bowl was for 40 years a culinary and recreational nexus for Crenshaw's African American and Japanese populations, and just about anyone else who came through. The Holiday Bowl was multifunctional, with a coffee shop, bowling alley, bar, and lounge that served up a wide range of food choices. At just about any hour you could get grits and udon, yakisoba and salmon patties, donburi and short ribs, and many other items on a menu that was as lengthy and diverse as any in the city.

### A PIONEERING LOOK

With its angular facade, bright orange accents, and large plate-glass windows that looked out onto Crenshaw Boulevard, the Armet & Davis-designed building was a classic example of the eye-catching Googie architecture that was prevalent throughout Los Angeles in the 1950s. Another prime example of Googie in the area was The Wich Stand, located a few miles away at Slauson Avenue and Overhill Drive.



The architect of the Holiday Bowl was Helen Liu Fong, who also designed Pann's on La Cienega Boulevard and Johnie's on Wilshire and Fairfax. Fong was known for her attention to interior detail, which at the Holiday Bowl



The Wich Stand was designed by Armet & Davis and embodied their renowned style.

## HOLIDAY BOWL

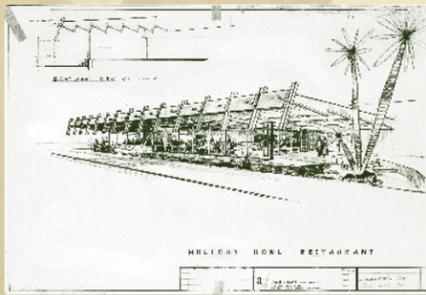


A local women's bowling team at a 1959 tournament for the Japanese American Citizens League at the Holiday Bowl.



Helen Liu Fong, designer of the Holiday Bowl, was a Chinese American architect, known for mid-century Googie architecture style in her buildings.

included white George Nelson bubble lamps and fiberglass Eames chairs wrapped in orange vinyl. On the outside, the bowling alley and adjoining coffee shop featured a futuristic roof line and a bold striped orange and white facade. The Japanese-influenced mid-century modern theme was most evident in the loungey Sakiba Room which had a ceiling inspired by Japanese folk woodwork.



An architectural rendering of the Holiday Bowl restaurant, c. 1956.

### HOLIDAY AS HISTORY

The local affection for Holiday was so strong, it remained untouched during the 1992 civil unrest; as fires raged on Crenshaw and elsewhere, people continued to show up to bowl. Despite valiant efforts to save the Bowl by city preservationists and community members, it was gutted in 2003 to make way for new developments. Today, only its glass facade remains.

Next door to the Holiday Bowl was another longtime Crenshaw business with an iconic look: the Majestic Pontiac car dealership (originally Ken Clark Pontiac.) Majestic was one of many car dealerships that once thrived on the boulevard in the 1950s and 1960s, a testament to the area's burgeoning black middle class. In the 1960s, the number of



Ken Clark Pontiac, which later became Majestic Pontiac. The original neon Indian head element was preserved and integrated in to the shopping center's sign.

dealerships on the boulevard peaked at eight; two of the longest-running were O'Connor Lincoln-Mercury, and Crenshaw Motors Ford. The former closed in 1990 and Crenshaw Motors Ford, the last dealership on the boulevard, shuttered in 2007. Majestic Pontiac, like its neighbor the Holiday Bowl, was long ago replaced; however, a single remnant remains of its former self: the classic neon Pontiac Indian head at the top of the towering shopping center sign.

## HOLIDAY BOWL



A matchbook cover advertising the Sakiba lounge.



Crenshaw Motors Ford at Crenshaw Boulevard and 53rd Street.

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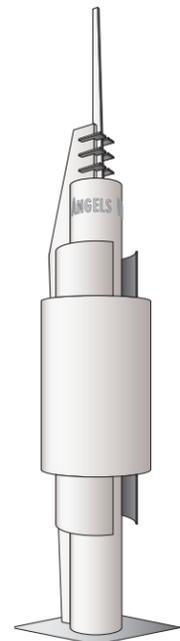
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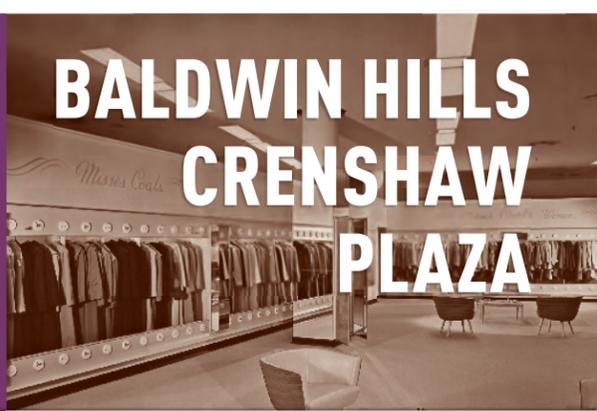
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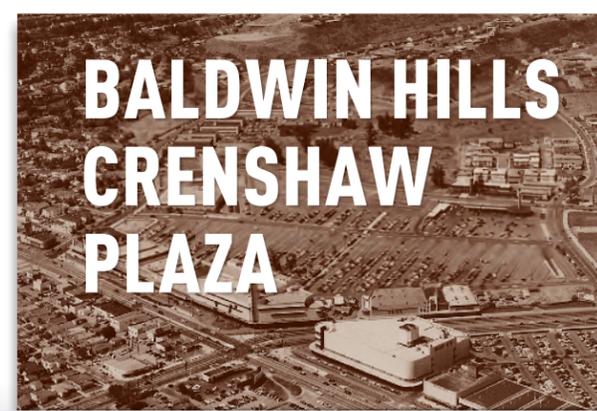
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ANGELS WALK CRENSHAW



## BALDWIN HILLS CRENSHAW PLAZA



## BALDWIN HILLS CRENSHAW PLAZA

ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK

# BALDWIN HILLS CRENSHAW PLAZA



*In 1948, the Von der Ahe brothers, of Von's markets, opened their most ambitious store (over 50,000 square feet) at the Broadway-Crenshaw Center. Thanks to the introduction of pre-packaged perishables, the store offered self-service produce, meat, and deli departments, making it one of the first true supermarkets as we know them today.*

### A SHOPPING REVOLUTION

The two-block-long Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, more popularly known as the Crenshaw Mall, is the retail heart of the Crenshaw area. It's been that ever since it first opened its doors in 1947 as the Broadway-Crenshaw Center, an outdoor regional shopping mall that was the first major retail hub in greater Los Angeles, and the first of its kind in the nation. Originally built as two separate shopping centers straddling

the Baldwin Hills and Crenshaw Manor districts, they were eventually classed as a single entity. The north end of the site was anchored by a May Company,

known as "May's Crenshaw" that was designed by Albert C. Martin and dedicated in October of 1947. The other section of the center was initially anchored by The Broadway and a Von's supermarket. Smaller specialty stores included Silverwood's and Desmond's. In 1988, the plaza was mostly torn down and enclosed by mall developer Alexander Hagen. Then, with the 1992 civil unrest, coupled with the recession, hopes that the plaza would become the economic engine it had once been were derailed.



*Deliveries to Von's and other stores in the shopping center were made through a vast underground loading dock, c. 1950.*



*An aerial view of the Broadway-Crenshaw Center, showing The Broadway, May Company, and Von's supermarket, c. 1952.*

### URBAN RENAISSANCE

In stepped Earvin "Magic" Johnson. The former Lakers luminary, also a member of West Angeles Church, formed Johnson Development Co. in the 1990s with the idea of lending his star power—and personal fortune—to reviving black urban neighborhoods like Crenshaw. When he opened the Magic Johnson Theatres multiplex, a partnership with Sony, on the grounds of the mall in 1995, it was hailed as a milestone for cinema-starved Crenshaw and an encouraging sign for black development in general. Magic then sought a much bigger prize: rights to redevelop Santa Barbara Plaza. The 23-acre shopping center directly across the street from the Crenshaw Mall, built in the 1950s, had fallen into decline and needed an Alexander Hagen of its own.

Magic envisioned an upscale center that would attract shoppers from the Hills who were used to driving west or south for quality goods and nice restaurants. It was a vision that resonated with just about everyone in Crenshaw, but the political and complicated financial demands of the project proved insurmountable for Johnson Development Co. In 2010, after fifteen years at the mall, Johnson quietly sold his share of the theaters.



*The Lakers' Magic Johnson opened his state-of-the-art Magic Johnson Theatres in the Crenshaw Plaza in 1995.*



*The Broadway department store at Broadway-Crenshaw Center, c. 1947.*



*Women shopping in May Co. store's cosmetic department, c. 1970.*

Though Magic Johnson's vision didn't turn out the way he'd hoped, he certainly made his mark: the Pan African Film Festival, the largest African American film festival showcasing filmmakers in the U.S. and the African diaspora, came "home" to the mall in 1999 after starting out at the Sunset Laemmle in West Hollywood. Through all the changes, the mall continues to endure as the focal point of Crenshaw and a major gathering place. Touches of the original Art Deco design have remained, including the curved corner facade of the old May Company and the spire atop the Old Broadway tower. For thirteen years, the former Broadway building was home to the nation's only three-story Walmart; however, the retail titan closed its Crenshaw location in 2016.



*Museum of African American Art in Los Angeles founder Samella Lewis, and director Mary Jane Hewitt, during the construction of the museum, c. 1984.*

### A CULTURAL TOUCHSTONE

Over the years, Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza has evolved into a center of black community and culture. In addition to the Pan African Film Festival, it now features the annual Leimert Park Village Book Fair. Through the years, it has featured popular Louisiana Creole restaurants such as Gagnier's, Chalee Blues, and the Creole Chef. Further, the Museum of African American Art is located on the third floor of Macy's, and in 2010, the Debbie Allen Dance Academy moved from Culver City onto the mall grounds. Inside the mall, which was extensively renovated in the 2010s, the bridge joining the two parts of the mall across Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard hosts various events, including jazz concerts, receptions, community forums, and a weekly farmer's market.

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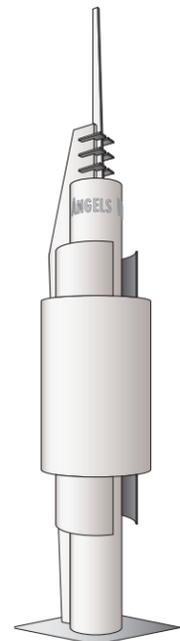
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*The Broadway building at Broadway-Crenshaw Center, c. 1947.*

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ANGELS WALK CRENSHAW



ANGELS WALK CRENSHAW

## LEIMERT PARK VILLAGE

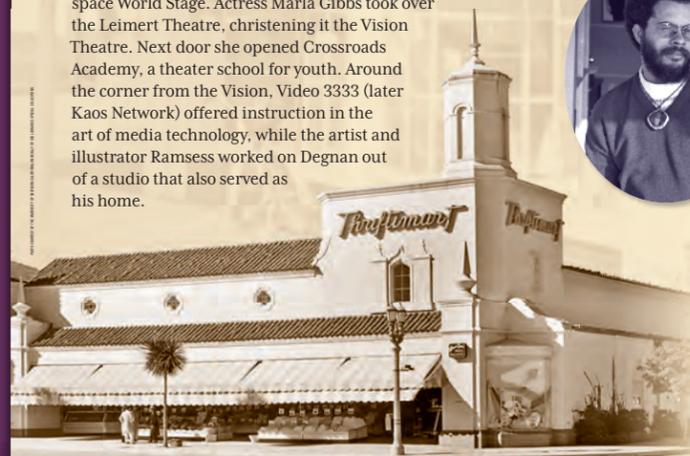


The original shopping district on Degnan Boulevard and 43rd provided a variety of goods and services to the residents of Leimert Park.

### FROM MAIN STREET TO STREET LIFE

When Walter H. Leimert developed the planned community of Leimert Park in 1927, he could hardly have imagined that its cozy commercial center—bordered by 43rd Street, 43rd Place, Degnan Boulevard, and Leimert Boulevard—would become one of the most culturally vibrant spots in Los Angeles.

The area started out as a typical main street, offering goods and services such as shoe repair, furniture, dry goods, and dentistry. In the late 1960s, Degnan Boulevard started emerging as a mecca of black art and commerce, as white flight accelerated and Leimert transitioned into a center of black economic and creative exploration. In 1967, artist and impresario Alonzo Davis, along with his brother Dale, opened Brockman Gallery at 4334 Degnan. Determined to create space and visibility for black artists shunned by the mainstream art world, the Davis brothers promoted the careers of renowned artists like sculptor Elizabeth Catlett and painter Romare Bearden. Thanks to Brockman, momentum grew for a black arts scene through the 1970s and 1980s, decades in which Degnan Boulevard continued to attract more artists, entrepreneurs, and organizations including Museum in Black, Africa by the Yard fabric store, Bak Tu Jua (later Sika), Kongo Square (later Zambezi), and the jazz performance space World Stage. Actress Marla Gibbs took over the Leimert Theatre, christening it the Vision Theatre. Next door she opened Crossroads Academy, a theater school for youth. Around the corner from the Vision, Video 3333 (later Kaos Network) offered instruction in the art of media technology, while the artist and illustrator Ramsess worked on Degnan out of a studio that also served as his home.



The Thriftmart in Leimert Park Village at the corner of Degnan and 43rd Street, c. 1939.



Opening night at the Brockman Gallery, 1967.

### ART AND COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER

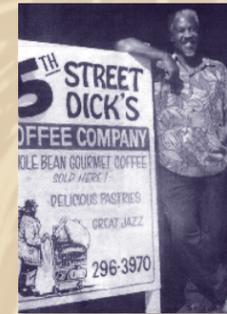
Despite the fires of civil unrest that burned in 1992, the scene on and around Degnan flourished, as more arts advocates and business owners began recognizing Leimert Park Village as a locus of black art and culture. The World Stage was founded in 1989 by legendary jazz drummer Billy Higgins and poet Kamau Daaood, and it quickly became known for world-class jazz performances and writing workshops in a tiny, gallery-sized space. In the 1990s, Degnan added the Dance Collective dance studio, Eso Won Books, and 5th Street Dick's jazz coffeehouse. Many of the businesses had stories, but 5th Street Dick's was especially remarkable. Owner Richard Fulton was once a homeless addict living on Skid Row who told himself that if he ever got on his feet, he would fulfill his dream of opening a late-night jazz joint that served coffee. 5th Street Dick's was that promise made good.



Brothers Alonzo and Dale Davis founded the Brockman Gallery in 1967 to provide exposure to both emerging and established black artists.



Brian Bryne, owner of Museum in Black, holds a historical sign depicting segregated seating laws, c. 1934.



Richard Fulton outside of 5th Street Dick's.

### THE VILLAGE EVOLVES

The area is in transition once again as it adapts to the accessibility created by the presence of the Crenshaw/LAX light-rail line. Despite the changes, Leimert Park locals are committed to retaining its authenticity and the legacy it has established as a distinctive cultural hub in the city of Los Angeles. Degnan and adjoining Leimert Plaza Park have been the place for many important events throughout the years, including long-standing festivals like the Kwanzaa Heritage Festival and the African Art & Music Festival. The Leimert Park Artwalk, which took its cue from successful downtown art walks, has also become a regular neighborhood event.



Participants in the 1988 annual Kwanzaa Parade.

In November of 2007 Degnan earned its own walk of fame: just south of 43rd Street, the sidewalk on the west side of the block was embedded with thirty-two African-motif plaques memorializing jazz musicians, artists, and others who contributed to the cultural renaissance of Leimert Park and to the cultural life of black Los Angeles. Honorees include Richard Fulton, Horace Tapscott, Alma Hightower, Dexter Gordon, Marla Gibbs, Cecil Ferguson, and others. The pathway is called the Sankofa Passage, which refers to a phoenix-like bird of Ghanaian mythology that looks backward over its shoulder while in flight—a symbol of embracing the past while simultaneously going forward into the future. It is a concept that Leimert Park Village, with its penchant for tradition but also its openness to change, has always tried to make real.

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For photos, the commercial strip on Degnan Boulevard, c. 1939.  
 Bottom photo: a group of work outside of Leimert Park's Thriftmart, c. 1939.

