

Outgoing Journey to Birmingham, Alabama

April 6-11, 2026

Ambassador Coordinator, Jerry Burke



Vulcan Park Statue

On April 6, nine Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Friendship Force members and one from Des Moines journeyed to Birmingham, Alabama. Ambassadors included Jerry & Carol Burke, Marty Novak, George & Stephanie Schulte, Judy Frascht-Miner, Gerry Frascht, Tom Hess & Nancy York and Shelley Bain.

After several flight delays, we finally arrived there in late Monday afternoon and evening. Following a welcome dinner we got settled in with our hosts.

Our first visit on Tuesday was to the Vulcan Park Museum for a guided tour that explained the importance of iron ore and coal to the development of Birmingham. We also took an elevator to the top of the Vulcan statue which is the tallest cast iron statue in the world, that was made for the St Louis World Fair.



Barber Motor Sports Museum

In the afternoon we visited Barber Motor Sports Museum which featured over 1000 motorcycles of every vintage and style. The day concluded with pizza and bingo.

Wednesday found us at the 16th St. Baptist Church for a guided tour. This is the church where four little black girls were killed in a bombing during the civil rights movement. Next, we visited the Civil Rights Museum across the street.

The day concluded with a tour of the Alabama Theater, similar to our Paramount Theater.



16th Street Baptist Church



Organ at Alabama Theater

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Sylacauga Marble Festival



Grist Meal Tour

Thursday took us out of Birmingham to the Sylacauga Marble Festival where we watched sculptures being created by local artists. We also visited the marble mines. The Sylacauga mine and one in Italy are the only two marble mines in the world to have this quality of white marble.

The afternoon tours included a visit to a grist mill, covered bridge, and Majestic Caverns. That evening we enjoyed small group dinners with club members.



Friday, we concluded our visit with a tour of the Birmingham Museum of Art, lunch on our own, and some free time. The farewell dinner was held at the Fish-market Restaurant.



Majestic Caverns

We offer our sincere thanks to the Birmingham club for showing us a wonderful time in their beautiful city.