

DRAFT:

CONTACT:

Amy Nagy
(978) 468-8752
amy.nagy@mullen.com

Kristen Raymakers
(978) 468-8943
kristen.raymakers@mullen.com

MASSACHUSETTS CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH
Statewide Events Recognize 2009 As An Exciting Year for Black History

February 4, 2008 (Massachusetts) – Massachusetts is home to many great African-Americans who have played a significant role in the country's formation. Individuals including Crispus Attucks, Phyllis Wheatley and Frederick Douglass, to name a few, fought alongside abolitionists in Massachusetts to make this country free and equal for everyone.

With the election of the country's first black President and Massachusetts' first black Governor, this is an especially exciting and poignant year to celebrate Black History Month.

Below is a sampling of historic trails, exhibits, lectures, films and musical performances across the state that will be recognizing Black History Month.

Trails & Tours

The African American Heritage Trail, Martha's Vineyard

This trail is comprised of 16 sites and is dedicated to the formerly unrecognized contributions made by people of African descent to the history of the island. A significant landmark on the trail is the Shearer Cottage, an inn established in 1912 by Charles Shearer, the son of a slave and slave owner. The Shearer Cottage catered to African Americans who were not welcome as guests at other Island establishments.

www.mvheritagetrail.org

**Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House
Throughout February**

Louisa May Alcott, long known as one of the world's favorite children's authors for her classic work, *Little Women*, was also a member of a fiercely abolitionist family. In commemoration of Black History Month, special guided tours throughout the month of February will highlight the Alcotts' commitment to anti-slavery and social justice— as evidenced by Miss Alcott's own service as a Civil War nurse, among many other reform activities.

Concord

978-369-4118

www.louisamayalcott.org

Black Heritage Trail, New Bedford

The trail commemorates significant landmarks of African American history in New Bedford. When Massachusetts abolished slavery in 1780, New Bedford became an important stop on the "underground railway," a network of people who hid runaway slaves in homes and churches. Frederick Douglass is one African American who found refuge in New Bedford before becoming a renowned abolitionist, orator, politician and writer.

www.whalingmuseum.org/kendall/old_nb/old_nb_african.html

African-American Patriots Tour of the Freedom Trail

Thursdays through Sundays throughout February, 12:00 p.m.

Throughout Black History Month, history lovers can join a 90-minute guided walking tour through historic events of the American Revolution and the contributions of African-Americans who played a significant role in the country's formation, including Crispus Attucks, Phyllis Wheatley, Prince Hall, Peter Salem and others. Tours leave from the Visitor Information Center on Boston Common. Tickets can be purchased online at TheFreedomTrail.org and at the Visitor Information Center.

Boston

617-357-8300 x202

www.TheFreedomTrail.org

The Black History Trail, Nantucket

Presented by the Museum of Afro-American History and the Friends of the African Meeting House on Nantucket, the Black History Trail features 10 sites that reveal the heritage of African Americans living on Nantucket, especially in the nineteenth century.

www.afroammuseum.org/bhtn_intro.htm

The *Parting Ways* Story, Plymouth

The *Parting Ways* story reopens the history books to tell a tale of four former slaves who were the first African American veterans in America. *Parting Ways* Township in Plymouth, founded by these men, was one of the very first African American settlements in North America. Today this small acreage is in the process of being redeveloped into a place of beauty and education.

www.partingways.org/cms/

Discover Roxbury Trolley Tour

February 28, Departs 12:30 p.m. (Roxbury Heritage State Park) and 12:50 p.m. (Back Bay Station)

Roxbury artist and native, Ekuia Holmes, will lead an informative and exciting trolley tour as it travels through three centuries of Boston's historic Black neighborhoods. Follow the progression of the Black churches, learn about the struggles of the Civil Rights movement, and hear about the movers, shakers and strivers in Roxbury's Black History. Stops include Wally's Jazz Cafe and the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists. Tickets are \$15.

Roxbury

617-427-1006

www.discoverroxbury.org

Exhibits

Race to the Top: Arctic Inspirations 1909 & Today

January 24 – May 17

The Berkshire Museum will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Robert Peary's 1909 expedition to the North Pole with a special exhibition. The exhibition will examine the role of Matthew Henson, the African American explorer who accompanied Peary on five expeditions to the Arctic. Peary and Henson together are widely believed to be the first people to reach the geographic location of the North Pole. Objects on exhibit include one of five sledges to make the trek to the pole and Henson's fur suit, as well as others.

Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield

413-443-7171

www.berkshireremuseum.org

Faith Ringgold: Works on Paper

February 7 – May 31

How do our particular memories, histories, and traditions shape us as individuals and inform the marks we leave on the world? For more than 40 years, Faith Ringgold has been formulating answers to this question in the paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and—perhaps most

famously—in quilts in which she documents her experiences as an African-American woman, mother, daughter, and artist. This exhibition includes 18 prints and paintings, echoing the themes of protest that characterized her early urban narrative paintings, as well as examples from her recent series on jazz musicians.

Mt. Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley
413-538-3185

www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/artmuseum/exhibitions/index.html#FAITHRINGGOLD

Masters at Work: A visit to AAMARP

February 21, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (Meet at the MBTA Stony Brook Station at 10:45 a.m.)

Spend an afternoon visiting the African American Master Artist-in-Residency Program (AAMARP). Guests can tour two of the AAMARP galleries and listen to Kay Bourne, of the Kay Bourne Arts Report, provide a brief history of the program. Afterward, visitors will have the opportunity to speak to artists about their work and make purchases. In addition, many of the artist studios will be open for viewing, including those of Hakim Raquib, Susan Thompson, Gloretta Baynes, Keith Washington and Walter Clark.

Roxbury
617-427-1006

www.discoverroxbury.org

Museum of African American History

Open all year

The Museum of African American History is New England's largest African American history museum with four national historic sites dating back to the early 1800s. The Museum preserves the remarkable and vivid history of free African Americans and white abolitionists whose efforts changed a nation.

Boston

www.afroammuseum.org

Films

Black History Month KidsFlicks Program

The Worcester Public Library will show four children's films throughout the month of February to celebrate and commemorate Black History. The movies and dates are as follows:

- *Posse* - February 3, 6:00-8:30 p.m.
- *Night John* - February 8, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
- *Kirikou & the Sorceress* - February 15, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
- *Daughters of the Dust* - February 24, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Worcester Public Library, Worcester
508-799-1672

www.worcpublib.org

Martha's Vineyard Motown Night Event

February 5, 5:30 p.m.

In celebration of Black History Month and the 50th Anniversary of Motown Records, The Edgartown Public Library and the Edgartown Council on Aging (ECO) have teamed up to present Motown Night. The event begins with a chicken gumbo and sweet potato pie dinner while listening to tunes from such artists as the Four Tops, the Supremes and Smokey Robinson. After dinner, the award-winning documentary film, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, will be shown on the center's big screen. For reservations, please call the ECO.

The Anchors, Edgartown
508-627-4368

edgartownlibrary.com/

Annual Boston African Film Festival

February 6-15

This event showcases a variety of African American dramatic films, including full-length features, documentaries, and, short films. Films including *Shoot the Messenger*, *Paris Selon Moussa*, *Heartlines*, *Kinshasa Palace*, *Delwende*, and *Awaiting for Men*, will be shown throughout the event.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

www.mfa.org/calendar/sub.asp?key=12&subkey=54

Traces of the Trade: Massachusetts and the Economy of Slavery

February 12, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Trans Atlantic slave trade, MA Humanities presents "Massachusetts and the Economy of Slavery," featuring a screening of Katrina Browne's documentary, *Traces of the Trade*, which follows a Rhode Island family as members discover their family legacy and connections to the Rhode Island slave trade. A panel discussion will follow.

New Bedford Whaling Museum Auditorium, New Bedford

www.nbhistoricalsociety.org/blackhistorymonth.html

Lectures

Assumption College

Assumption College is holding several events throughout the month to celebrate Black History Month.

- Discussion with Bruce Western, a Harvard expert on race and inequality - February 2, 7:00 p.m., La Maison Salon
- Presentation on "Racial Healing" by its author Reginald Newkirk - February 5, 6:00 p.m., Plourde Recreation Center
- An evening with Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers (D-Omaha) - February 12, 6:00 p.m., Kennedy Memorial Hall/Public Safety, Alden Trust Auditorium (Room 112)

Assumption College, Worcester

508-767-7160

www.assumption.edu

The Life and Legacy of Dr. King

February 18, 7:30 p.m.

Human rights activist Dorothy Cotton will give the keynote address for the annual Williams College commemoration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dorothy Cotton was a leader of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), part of his inner circle, and director of SCLC's Citizenship Education Program. She played a critical leadership role in the 1963 Birmingham campaign and in the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike. Please contact the '62 Center box office for tickets.

Williams College '62 Center for Theatre and Dance, Williamstown

413-597-2425

www.williams.edu/go/atwilliams/?start=1/22/2009#event1793

The Zion Union Heritage Museum

February 21, 2:00-4:00 pm

Claire Andrade-Watkins, Professor at Emerson College, as well as a filmmaker and author, will discuss her film *Celebrating Cape Verdean Culture in New England*. Guests can enjoy Cape Verdean cuisine following the presentation.

Zion Union Heritage Museum, Hyannis

www.zionunionheritagemuseum.org/calendarofevents.html

The Life and Legacy of Adam Clayton Powell Jr.

February 26, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Dr. Adam Clayton Powell IV will discuss the life and work of his grandfather, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Harlem's Congressman from 1945 until 1971 and a preeminent civil rights leader in the United States from the 1930s through the 1950s. Powell's legislative and personal efforts drove the desegregation of public schools, of the military, even of the U.S. Capitol itself.

North Shore Community College, Lynn
www.northshore.edu/news/story?id=383

Dance and Music

Tribute to Motown

February 7, 8:00 p.m.

The Springfield Symphony Orchestra and Motown foursome Spectrum pay tribute to Motown's soulful sounds, smooth harmony and fancy footwork. Go back to the golden age of groups like The Four Tops, The Temptations, and Smokey Robinson & The Miracles.

Symphony Hall, Springfield
413-733-2291

www.springfieldsymphony.org

Victory! The 2009 Black History Month Step Show Celebration

February 20, 8:00 p.m.

The Victory! Step Show features regional and local step teams competing on the Mechanics Hall stage. Created by African American fraternities and sororities in the mid-twentieth century, step is a complex dance form that grew out of a wider African American tradition and aesthetic. Over the past fifty years, step has incorporated elements of many other popular artistic forms, including military drills, children's games, cheerleading, martial arts, acrobatics, hip hop, and tap dancing, while still retaining its distinctiveness. For tickets, please call the Mechanics Hall Box Office.

Mechanics Hall, Worcester
508-752-0888

www.mechanicshall.org

Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Company

February 27, 8:00 p.m.

"Stalwart Originality: New Traditions in Black Performance" presents the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Company in celebration of the legendary Katherine Dunham, whose research in African and Caribbean culture fueled her later work as a dancer, choreographer, scholar, educator, writer, and activist. This concert features the choreography of Katherine Dunham.

Williams College '62 Center for Theatre and Dance, Williamstown
413-662-5204

www.mcla.edu/About_MCLA/Community/bcrc/mclapresents/cleoparkerrobinsondanceensemble

The Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) is the state agency dedicated to promoting Massachusetts as a leisure-travel destination in order to stimulate the Massachusetts economy by generating state and local tax revenues, creating jobs, and supporting the growth of travel-related businesses. MOTT serves as a leader in the tourism industry, bringing together the public and private sectors to promote Massachusetts as a leisure travel destination. Tourism is an integral part of the state's economy, generating more than \$887.2 million in state and local taxes and \$14.2 billion in travel related expenditures. The industry supports 125,800 in-state jobs.

###

