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Kick Off Black History Month at the 16th Annual African American Cultural Celebration



RALEIGH, N.C. — Join the **North Carolina Museum of History** for the **16th Annual African American Cultural Celebration**, the state's kickoff event to Black History Month, which begins in February. This festive and educational event for all ages will take place **Saturday, January 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** in downtown Raleigh. Named a Top 20 Event by the Southeast Tourism Society three years in a row, the festival will feature over 75 musicians, storytellers, dancers, chefs, historians, playwrights, authors, artists, reenactors, and more. ***Admission and parking are free.***

The past is interwoven with the present at the start of the festival, as the Tryon Palace Jonkonnu Drummers, an old West Indies tradition, pave the way, followed shortly after by their younger counterpart, A Drummer's World Drumline. Michelle Lanier, Director of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission (AAHC) and Dr. Valerie Ann Johnson, AAHC Chair and Professor at Bennett College, will then welcome everyone to the festival to officially kick it off.

Excitement builds throughout the day as dancers, singers, storytellers and other presenters fill the museum's lobby, third floor and auditorium. For example, visitors will hear the journey of African American music history through song by Sandra Dubose, known by many as "the Black Beauty Queen of Self-Esteem." Award-winning journalist Bridgette Lacy will enlighten audience members on the tradition of Southern food on Sundays. There will be plenty of hands-on activities for children, such as a gallery hunt (with a prize as incentive), a toy-making station, a cowrie shell necklace-making activity and so much more. Food will be available from the museum's own Pharaoh's, so enjoy lunch and stay awhile.

"Each year, the planning committee says, "We can't top this year's event!" and each year, the event just gets bigger and better," says Emily Grant, coordinator of the festival. "The celebration has grown over the years from a small afternoon event with a few hundred people, to a daylong event serving as the state-wide kickoff to Black History Month with thousands in attendance. This year's theme is The Shoulders We Stand On—a time to reflect, honor and celebrate where we've been, who we are now and where we are going."

During the day, take advantage of firsthand opportunities to learn about the state's African American culture, past and present. **Here's a sampling of what you can experience.**

- Music and dance will take the stage with the gospel sounds of the Wray Sisters and The New Spiritual Souls, the fusion of soul and country from Rissi Palmer, and others.
- Hands-on activities include playing with and making toys with Bennett Place State Historic Site, crafting a cowrie shell necklace with Stagville Historic Site, creating a doctor's head mirror with staff from the Pope House Museum, and much more.
- Learn about Palmer Memorial Institute, a school founded in 1902 for upper-class African Americans, using photographs, music and documents with staff from Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum.
- Watch an original play by Dominique Williams, set at Shaw University in the 1960s, where the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was formed.
- Let off some STEAM with Lollipop and Mop Top, the Hip-Hop Scientist.
- Listen to Dr. Jason Miller's discussion of the first "I Have a Dream" speech, which was originally delivered in Rocky Mount in 1962.

For a **full schedule** of all **performances** and **presentations**, visit NCMOH-programs.com or call 919-807-7900.

Mark your calendars for the **16th Annual African American Cultural Celebration**. This event is supported by the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, United Arts Council, N.C. Writers' Network, *The Triangle Tribune*, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the North Carolina Museum of History Associates.

For information about the N.C. Museum of History, a Smithsonian-affiliated museum, call [919-807-7900](tel:919-807-7900), access ncmuseumofhistory.org, or follow on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and YouTube.

IMAGES and Dropbox Link

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/DNCR/Events/16th%20Annual%20African%20American%20Cultural%20Celebration>

About the N.C. Museum of History

The N.C. Museum of History is located at 5 E. Edenton Street in downtown Raleigh. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum collects and preserves artifacts of North Carolina history and educates the public on the history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. Each year more than 400,000 people visit the museum to see some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

About the N.C. African American Heritage Commission (honorary sponsor)

The N.C. African American Heritage Commission, which is a part of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, is based at the N.C. Arts Council. The Commission is charged to preserve, protect, and promote North Carolina's African American history, arts, and culture for *all* people!

About the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by

creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 39 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the nation's first state-supported Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, along with the Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, please call 919-807-7300 or visit ncdcr.gov.

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