

Economic Empowerment Theme of Black History Month at UC San Diego

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The need for economic development has been a central element to African-American empowerment and livelihood. After centuries of unrequited toil and despite gaining freedom, African-Americans were still plagued by a discriminatory society and the ills of poverty. In this regard, the University of California, San Diego is recognizing Black History Month with several events that reflect this year's theme, *Recognizing the Future of Black Economic Empowerment*.

"The timing of this idea could not be better," said Pamela Frugé, co-chair of the celebration. "The economic empowerment of African-Americans in this country, and for any group of people anywhere, speaks to the ultimate ability to build prosperous communities. As we face our current economic crisis, it is critical for all of us to look at ourselves and make improvements and prepare for a better future today."

From art exhibits to benefits for undergraduate scholarships and a theatrical re-enactment of the inauguration of President Barack Obama, UC San Diego will recognize Black History Month with a myriad of events. The month-long celebration will give the campus and San Diego community the opportunity to learn, connect and celebrate a rich cultural history while looking forward to a future that holds tremendous possibility, Frugé said.

Black History Month kicks off with Cecil Lytle's "Liszt-O-Mania" concert, Jan. 31, in Conrad Prebys Concert Hall, where world-renowned pianist Lytle will perform Liszt's compositions as a precursor to Franz Liszt's 200th birthday. Proceeds from the concert will go directly to the Endowed Lytle Scholarship, which is awarded to exceptional graduates of The Preuss School.

UC San Diego will hold its formal Black History Month opening reception at noon, Feb. 2 in the Price Center Plaza. The event, hosted by the Black Student Union, will feature speakers and performances.

There will be a showing of the film *Bilal's Stand* at noon, Feb. 4, in the Cross-Cultural Center. The film, based on a true story, is about a Detroit high school senior, who is forced to decide between working at his family's long-owned taxi stand or to take a chance at social mobility by applying for college.

In accordance with the first anniversary of President Obama's term in office, award winning actor M'Lafi Thompson will perform her one person show, "The Inauguration of Barack Obama: One Year Later" on Feb. 23. "Collaborating with UC San Diego's MFA playwright, Ronald McCants, Thompson will explore some political portraits in an engaging narrative, partly inspired by her participation in the Washington, D.C., inaugural parties last year," said Thurgood Marshall Provost, Allan Havis. Havis is a professor of theatre and dance and author of 13 published plays. He added that Thurgood Marshall College sponsors several Black History Month events due to the colleges' unique sense of community, diversity and passion for social justice.

The Black History Month Scholarship brunch, held on Feb. 27 at 10:30 a.m. will feature a silent auction benefiting undergraduate scholarships at UC San Diego and outstanding student scholars will be recognized at the brunch. This traditional event includes a soul food meal, keynote address and a performance from local gospel choirs. The keynote speaker at this year's brunch is Donald Murphy, '75, current CEO of the National

Underground Railroad Freedom Center based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Murphy was recently recognized as Alumnus of the Year by the UC San Diego Alumni Association.

The 2010 Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action and Diversity Awards program takes place at 2 p.m., Feb. 9 in the Price Center West Ballroom and will recognize employees, faculty, staff, students, department or organizational units, who have made an outstanding contribution in any or all areas of diversity at UC San Diego during the past year.

Throughout the month, there will be an exhibit on black film in the west wing of the Geisel Library. In addition, works from video artist lauren woods' series *The AFRICA Archives* will be on display at the University Art Gallery in an exhibition titled *M(other)land*. The show included videos, still photographs and other mixed-media works depicting the African continent as it is still primarily seen through the veil of social crises, Hollywood movies and television news.

A full listing of UC San Diego's Black History Month events can be found at: <http://provost.ucsd.edu/blackhistorymonth/>

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