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First Virtual Conference to Feature Rev. William Barber; Rep. Terri Sewell; Civil Rights Veteran Ruby Sales; Poet Sonia Sanchez, others; Celebrates 2020 Theme: “African Americans and the Vote”

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In these extraordinary times, **The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)** is proud to announce that its 105th Annual Conference will take place virtually via Zoom in September. With a world-wide pandemic ongoing, with The Black Lives Matter global movement having brought about a call to action for social justice and reform, and with a national election fast approaching in November, ASALH’s theme of “**African Americans and the Vote**” has never been timelier. The conference will feature a rich program of scholarly sessions, professional workshops, riveting plenaries, an exciting film festival, and many other events that illuminate the importance of the vote in the Black experience.

The 2020 conference theme “African Americans and the Vote” will take center stage throughout the entire month of September on Thursdays and Saturdays with amazing speakers such as **Congresswoman Terri Sewell** of Alabama’s 7th District; **Professor Carol Anderson** of Emory University; the **Reverend William Barber II**, President and Senior Lecturer of Repairers of the Breach and Co-Chair of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival; the **Reverend Floyd Thompkins, Jr.**, of the San Francisco Theological Seminary and Chief Executive Officer of the Justice and Peace Foundation; representatives from the **National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA)**; civil rights veteran **Ruby Sales**; Philadelphia’s first poet laureate **Sonia Sanchez**; **LaTosha Brown and Cliff Albright**, co-founders of Black Voters Matter; Democratic strategist and creator of “Woke Vote” **DeJuana Thompson**; and a host of others.

The year 2020 marks the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment and the culmination of the women’s suffrage movement. The year 2020 also marks the sesquicentennial of the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) and the right of black men to the ballot after the Civil War. The conference will explore these important milestones and their relevance to the political landscape of today. As **Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham**, ASALH’s National President has stated, “ASALH, as we call our organization, was established in 1915 by the Harvard-trained historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950), who believed that accurate knowledge of the past was crucial to the struggle for racial equality and social justice. Woodson was a pathbreaking thinker at a time when our nation’s courts upheld the legality of Jim Crow segregation, the denial of the vote in the southern states, and mass incarceration of black men, women, and children through the convict-lease system...Blacks lived as second-class citizens—without adequate schools, equal employment, access to healthcare, and protection from rampant racial violence in the form of lynching.”

Beginning on September 3rd through September 26, 2020, conference activities will be broadcast every Thursday and Saturday via Zoom and ASALH TV. Our 50 (fifty) minute-session format will convene on Thursdays in September starting at 12:30 p.m. EST and run until 6:00 p.m. EST. Saturday sessions will run from 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST. A closing finale will take place Wednesday, September 30th from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST. Anyone can register for the conference at the following address: <https://asalh.org/conference/>

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