



PBS Books and ASALH Form a Partnership to Celebrate Powerful Voices of African American Authors

An ongoing series of author talks and conversations to be launched during Black History month

Today at 5 p.m.: Join a conversation with trailblazer Dr. Mae Jemison, the first woman of color in space on [Facebook Live](#)

As the nation struggles to understand its past and forge a more equitable future, PBS Books and ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History) have formed a new alliance, committed to highlighting the most acclaimed and important African American authors of our time and the insights they provide on issues related to diversity and cultural literacy.

That this partnership is launching during Black History Month is particularly fitting, as ASALH was founded in 1915 by the Harvard-trained historian, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who later established Negro History Week in 1926.

ASALH and PBS Books have developed a series of virtual programs that celebrate the work and accomplishments of African American authors and foster dialogue about Black contributions to arts and contemporary thought in communities across the nation.

The theme of this year's series is: A Celebration of African American Life and History. All programs can be viewed on the [PBS Books' Facebook page](#), the [ASALH](#) and [PBS Books](#) YouTube channels, and the [PBS Books website](#), as well as through the digital platforms of many libraries participating in the PBS Books Engagement Program.

About the partnership, Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, president of ASALH and professor of History and African American Studies at Harvard University, had this to say: "We are thrilled to join together with PBS Books to share important narratives of African Americans at this crucial moment for our country."

ASALH is dedicated to the study, publication and dissemination of knowledge about Black History. Through a variety of events at the local and national levels, including its upcoming 106th annual conference in September 2021, ASALH brings people together to celebrate and further this mission.

In February 2021, ASALH is celebrating its 95th annual Black History commemoration with a virtual Black History Month Festival, which features several free events including the two collaborations with PBS

Books listed below. The theme for 2021—The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity—will be the focus for Black History Month and the entire year. For more information, visit ASALH.org.

Managed by Detroit Public TV, PBS Books is a national initiative to connect authors and readers, with a network of more than 1,800 libraries that participate in its Library Engagement Program. These libraries will have an opportunity throughout the year to share the important content of this collaboration with their local communities and celebrate the lives of Black Americans.

PBS Books could not imagine a better partner than ASALH, which for years has served as the epicenter for thought and dialogue on critical issues related not only to the African American community, but to the whole of American life. Together, we can provide the most powerful voices in African American writing and ideas a nationwide platform to foster courageous and timely conversations.

On Wednesday, **February 3, at 5 p.m. ET**, the first collaborative program features **Trailblazer: Dr. Mae Jemison**. A remarkable hero, Dr. Mae is a physician, engineer, educator, social scientist, entrepreneur and former NASA astronaut. In 1992, she became the world's first woman of color to travel into space. During the interview, Dr. Mae shares her inspiring story as she discusses her newly re-released memoir, ***Finding Where the Wind Goes***. This program is intended for the young (ages 8 and up) and the young at heart.

Closing out the month, there will be an event focused on **The Black Family**, highlighting acclaimed Kenyan author **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o** on Sunday, **February 28, at 7 p.m. ET**. Thiong'o, along with scholars **Nubia Kai** and **Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua**, will explore ***The Perfect Nine***, a dazzling modern epic, myth and feminist re-imagining of Kenya's origins, which subverts patriarchy and promotes social equity. They will discuss elements relevant to today's struggles for social justice, gender equity and spiritual rebirth, while illuminating eternal African values essential for wholesome family life.

In the spring, PBS Books and ASALH programming will include: 1) a conversation on ***The Black Church*** pivoting off the landmark PBS series of that title by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and 2) a discussion of the newly released book, ***To Make Their Own Way in the World***, exploring the close relationship between photography and race in the mid-1800s, as well as visual narratives of slavery and its lasting effects.

The collaborative series will offer many more such enlightening and engaging programs throughout the year, with details soon to be released.

For more information, please visit www.pbsbooks.org or www.asalh.org