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106th Annual Meeting & Virtual Conference to Celebrate 2021 Theme: “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity”

WASHINGTON, D.C. — **The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)**—with the support of its Florida Branches known as the “Florida Coalition”—is proud to announce that its 106th Annual Meeting and Conference will take place virtually via Zoom every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from September 14th to 30th, 2021. In these unprecedented times, when the COVID pandemic has not yet subsided, when Voting Rights are imperiled, and Critical Race Theory is being banned in many states across the country—including Florida (the original planned location for the in-person conference)—ASALH’s 2021 theme, “**The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity,**” has never been more relevant, needed, or vital. Conference attendees will surely be informed and inspired by the scholarly sessions, professional workshops, riveting plenaries, exciting film festival, and the many other events that illuminate the vitality and resilience of the Black family in the past and present.

The conference will feature a rich program of presenters and panels representing diverse professional and institutional backgrounds, perspectives, and voices. Over the two-week period of September 14th to September 30th, Plenary Sessions will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00-6:00 pm EST and on Saturdays from 3:30-5:30 pm EST. The plenary of the **National Parks Conservation Association** on Tuesday, September 14th, will focus on the Black family and the fight for Civil Rights; **Black Families and Public Policy: New Frontiers in the Fight for Black Families** on Thursday, September 16th, will examine the impact of historic and recent public policy decisions on today’s Black families; **Black History and Family Legacies** on Saturday, September 18th, will explore the legacies of several major Black historical figures through their family members living today, including the descendants of Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, and Madame C.J. Walker, and Elijah Muhammad; **Black People, Health and Wellness: A Historical Perspective** on Tuesday, September 21st serves as a preview of next year’s Black History theme; **From Roots to Ancestry: Doing Black Family History** on Thursday, September 23rd, is co-sponsored with the James Dent Walker chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) based in Washington, DC; and the plenary, **The Centennial Anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre and Anti-Black Violence** on Tuesday, September 28th, will feature John W. Franklin, former curator of the National Museum of African American History & Culture and son of the late John Hope Franklin, a legend in the field of Black History.

A very special “**Retrospective Plenary**” honoring **Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.** will occur on September 25th from 3:30-5:30 PM EST, featuring prominent voices on the scholarly, personal, and wider public impact of his work on the Black family. The conferring of this well-deserved recognition is expected to serve as a highlight to this year's conference.

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And there is so much more! Conference attendees will not want to miss the many other fascinating events--the Hine-Horne Book Roundtables, Black Film Festival, Felix Armfield Series for Graduate Students, Presidential Sessions, Poster Session, Branch Workshops, Professional Workshops, Exhibits, Sponsors, Key Sessions, and Author Book Talks. Speakers will provide detailed, comprehensive, and descriptive presentations that outline the scope and aim of the conference theme. They will provide answers to some of the most pressing questions of our time—and some of the most difficult.

This year's theme of "The Black Family" offers a rich tapestry of images for exploring the African American past and present. As **Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham**, ASALH's National President has stated, "No single word is more illustrative of our humanity—of who we are—than the word 'family.' It stands at the heart of human relationships, representing the essence of ties that bind people together by blood, by race, by social affinity, by national heritage, and by religious conviction. We constitute, for example, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and descendants of ancestors. We claim fictive kin in aunts, uncles, and cousins not actually related to us by blood. We cherish the sisterhood and brotherhood of our sororities and fraternal organizations. People identify their national heritage with familial imagery, such as homeland, Motherland, or Fatherland. And we form the 'household of faith' as 'brothers and sisters' who look to the Fatherhood and Mother-heart of God. The history of the Black family is an integral part of our nation's heritage. Black family traditions of foodways and the arts, of sports and music, to name just a few, have been a significant progenitor of American culture and identity."

The Plenary Sessions are free and open to the public on ASALH TV, ASALH's YouTube Channel. Registration is required to see the full offering of programs during the conference. Registration for the conference and the full schedule can be viewed at the following address: <https://asalh.org/conference/>

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