



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 27, 2022

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ASALH Kicks Off Black History Month with its Second Black History Month Virtual Festival

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) is proud to announce the 2022 National Black History Theme – “**Black Health and Wellness.**” We observe this theme in the midst of a worldwide pandemic in which racism has been labeled a “**public health crisis**” and during an ever-growing awareness about the ways in which African Americans have been disproportionately affected by health concerns.

The theme will be unveiled officially on February 1st by our new **President Dr. W. Marvin Dulaney**, Associate Professor Emeritus and former Interim Director of the Center for African American Studies at the University of Texas, Arlington, and former Deputy Director and COO of the African American Museum in Dallas, Texas.

This year’s **Black History Month Virtual Festival** includes the marquee event, **Black Bodies: From Exploitation to Excellence**, a two part-series exploring the historic exploitation of African Americans for the advancement of scientific and medical discovery. Both sessions will illuminate how these challenges and practices were used to leverage change in the medical profession, yet foster resilience and excellence in our communities.

Black Bodies Part I: Exploitation in Medicine, takes place on February 12, 2022, from 12:00 – 2:00 P.M. EST, and will include panelists who will speak on race, gender and the origins of American gynecology, Henrietta Lacks HeLa cells and the Lyles Station radiation experiments. It features panelists: **Dr. Deirdre Cooper Owens, author of *Medical Bondage*; Wilbert Smith, Author and Film Producer; Dr. Roland Pattillo, Vice President of the Henrietta Lacks Foundation; Dr. Clyde Yancy, also with the Henrietta Lacks Foundation; and Ms. Lisa Villarosa as Moderator.** **Black Bodies Part II: Race Norming in the National Football League (NFL)**, will feature a round table discussion among former NFL players and sports medicine professionals including, **Robert Moore, former Atlanta Falcon; Tim Watson, former Green Bay Packer; Roger Jackson and Rubin Carter both former Denver Broncos. Ryan Heathcock, former Howard University Bison football player**, will moderate this critical discussion on issues of race norming, injury, mental health, and other relevant topics affecting the health and well-being of Black athletes on February 27, 2022, 5:00 - 6:30 PM EST. Registration ranges between \$65 to \$150 and is available through asalh.org/festival.

Be sure to participate in our other fascinating events that analyze and illuminate the theme and importance of **Black Health and Wellness** in the African American experience including a forum on the “Psychological Legacy of Slavery,” in partnership with the **National Park Service**; several stimulating

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book talks co-sponsored with **PBS Books** featuring **Harriet A. Washington** and **Dr. Sandro Galea**; our Second Annual **ASALH Book Prize Award**; and special programming from the ASALH Manhattan Branch. The **Black History Month Virtual Festival** is our major **Black History Month** event of the year, and we would be honored to have you.

A highlight of this year's Festival is a moderated conversation with ASALH President **W. Marvin Dulaney** and a President of a Historically Black Medical School and professional health organizations. This event will take place Saturday, February 19, 2022, from 2:00 to 4 pm. EST. These include: **Cheryl Lee-Butler, President-Elect of the National Dental Association**; **Dr. Joseph L. Wright, Chief Health Equity Officer at the University of Maryland Medical System**; **Dr. David Carlisle, President and CEO of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine (CDU) and Science**; and finally, **Dr. Rachel Villanueva, President of the National Medical Association**. The conversation will cover a broad landscape of topics addressing Black Health and Wellness, from the historical significance of the establishment of Black medical schools and professional organizations, and the scientific contributions of Black medical professionals to contemporary issues related to health disparities, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the health professions, medical ethics, and public trust in medical practice.

Our founder, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, initiated Negro History Week in the second week of February 1926. In 2022 ASALH will mark the 96th observance of what has become **Black History Month**. This festival continues and expands the tradition of our Black History luncheon. This virtual event, which will be celebrated throughout the entire month of February, recognizes the leading role of African Americans in history and will be broadcast via Zoom and ASALH TV.

As ASALH National President, Dr. Dulaney has stated, "The theme of **Black Health and Wellness** not only addresses the history of healthcare in the African American community, it is also a historical examination of the financial and economic health and wellness of African Americans. Broadening and expanding the theme to address what some historians and health care professionals call the "social and economic determinants" of health and wellness allows us to show the interconnectedness of a number of historical, social and economic factors on **Black Health and Wellness**."

This new set of events is a stellar opportunity to join with us in commemorating the extraordinary role of Black people in shaping the nation and world. As America confronts its past, we affirm the resiliency of people of African descent, demonstrated over generations by Black families and communities.

The theme for 2022 focuses on the importance of **Black Health and Wellness**. This theme honors the legacy of not only Black scholars and medical practitioners in Western medicine, but also other ways of knowing (e.g., birth workers, doulas, midwives, naturopaths, herbalists, etc.) throughout the African Diaspora. The 2022 theme considers activities, rituals and initiatives that Black communities have done to be well.

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