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“We Are Back!”

ASALH Brings its First In-Person Conference Since the Pandemic to Montgomery, Alabama with Annual Theme: “Black Health and Wellness”

MONTGOMERY, Ala.— **The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)** is proud to announce a triumphant return to an in-person conference with its 107th Annual Meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, from September 29th to October 1st. The conference will feature a rich program of scholarly sessions, professional workshops, historical tours, film festival, the Author’s Book Signing series, and many other events that illuminate the importance of what some historians and health care professionals call the social and economic determinants of health and wellness. ASALH’s annual theme for 2022, **“Black Health and Wellness”** has never been more timely, nor more deserving of study.

The theme **Black Health and Wellness** provides multiple ways to explore, learn and share both historical and modern perspectives on the fight to achieve health equity and well-being while grappling with intersecting inequalities intentionally baked into America’s systems and structures since 1619. As ASALH National President, Dr. W. Marvin Dulaney has stated, “The theme of **Black and Health 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.**”

“Black Health and Wellness” will take center stage September 29th to October 1st with amazing speakers such as **Deirdre Cooper Owens** of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and author of the book *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender and the Origins of American Gynecology*, which won the 2018 Darlene Clark Hine Book Award from the Organization of American Historians (OAH); **Stephanie Y. Evans**, Georgia State University; **Kimberly Jeffries Leonard**, Immediate Past National President of The Links, Incorporated and The Links Foundation; and **Michelle Browder**, Artist, *The Mothers of Gynecology*; as well as musician and Alabama native **Fred Wesley** for a session entitled “Remembering the Roots of Funk: An Oral History with Fred Wesley and **Dr. Scot Brown.**”

Gathering in Montgomery, Alabama, home to several key events in the Civil Rights Movement—the right to self-determination and the pursuit of happiness—is equally significant in our present-day struggles with race and the teaching of Black History. As such, our conference will feature several presentations on Alabama

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culture and history, the most prominent being “Southern State Legislation 2022: The Panic Over Critical Race Theory and the Future of Academic Freedom,” featuring Alabama State University professor, **Darren E. Moten**. Joined by a panel of top scholars from Florida, Virginia, Mississippi and Alabama, states which sought to limit the teaching of African American history by falsely equating it with “Critical Race Theory,” ASALH will lead the discussion on the outlawing of teaching history that “makes people uncomfortable.”

The conference will also feature **Bryan Stevenson** of the **Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)**. A human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama, EJI has won major legal challenges eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, and challenging the abuse of incarcerated and mentally ill adults. Additionally, Mr. Stevenson led the creation of two highly acclaimed cultural sites and was the subject of a feature length motion picture “Just Mercy,” documenting his work.

You won’t want to miss our tours of historic Alabama sites including Selma, home of the Voting Rights campaign, on Wednesday, September 28th, the day before the official conference opening. On Thursday, September 29th, we explore the **EJI Legacy Pavilion & National Memorial for Peace and Justice**. We close out this series on Sunday, October 1st, with a trip to Tuskegee, home of the famed Tuskegee Institute (now **Tuskegee University**) which will also explore historical issues of health and the “Black body.”

Leave room for the second installment of our ASALH Film Festival, Thursday, September 29th and Saturday, October 1st, in which four critically acclaimed films will be screened including, *The SixTripleEight: No Mail, No Morale*, about the 855 Black women sent to to England and France to clear the backlog of mail in the European Theater of Operations during World War II; and *Sweet Home Alabama & Afrikan By Way Of American*, a two-film documentary on Africatown, Alabama. Be sure to partake of Friday, September 30th, and join us as we connect with the **Journal of African American History (JAAH)** and **Alabama State Archive and Museum** for a special night out.

Lastly, our Darlene Clark Hine-Gerald Horne Book Roundtable Series will feature the authors **Cherisse Jones Branch**, **Julius Fleming**, and **Treva Lindsey**. Another highlight includes a discussion of *Justice Deferred: Race and the Supreme Court*, by authors **Orville Vernon Burton** and **Armand Derfner** which traces the ways in which the Supreme Court sustained slavery, upheld the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments during the early years of Reconstruction, and shamefully succumbed to a racist retreat from equal rights until the 1940s. Joining them are Alabama Civil Rights Attorney, **Fred Gray**, and **Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham**, former ASALH President and the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and African American Studies at Harvard University, who will serve as moderator.

Political, economic, and social disfranchisement, Jim Crow, lynching, and other forms of racial violence were a de facto part of life for many African Americans in the South. Racial inequalities wrought by slavery and King Cotton adversely impacted the Black Belt well into the 20th century. To further explore this critical theme, the **National Parks Conservation Association** will host a Plenary Session on Friday, September 30th entitled “Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area: Healing Through History & Culture.”

We look forward to seeing you in Alabama from **September 29 to October 1, 2022!** Registration for in-person as well as virtual attendance is open to all at the following address: <https://asalh.org/conference>.

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