

To: Aaisha Haykal, Vice President for Programming, ASALH

From: Gregory Mixon,

Re: Film Festival Report

Date: October 18, 2022

The ASALH Film Festival occurred September 29-October 1, 2022, in Montgomery, Alabama at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel in room Montgomery 3 on the second floor. The films were scheduled:

- 2:15pm-10 pm Thursday, September 29;
- 8:30am-10pm Friday September 30;
- Saturday October 1, 8-10am special replacement showing due to technical problems with one session on Friday, and 10:15am-10 pm Saturday.

Personnel—Dr. Derrick Lanois and Dr. Theo Moore planned the Film Festival. Due to a family commitment, Dr. Moore was unable to attend the Film Festival sessions. Dr. Lanois with an assistant and Woodson Scholars from North Carolina A&T University as well as Montgomery volunteers operated the technical equipment and ensured the room's security with Renaissance Hotel staff. Dr. Lanois coordinated and trouble shot the technology essentially alone while also presenting and serving on two panels outside the Film Festival.

Attendance:

I did not keep a running total of attendees. The sessions I did observe on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday averaged 7-10 people per session. Many of those in attendance were passionately committed to the topics shown. **The 6888 session** (#100) honoring Ms. Romay Davis member of the 6888 needless to say filled the room to capacity.

Personal Observation:

- One Woodson scholar who assisted Dr. Lanois was impressed with the conference and the opportunity to attend.
- Several attendees were impressed with the overall conference and enjoyed it.
- I was not able to attend any sessions other than the one I chaired on Saturday.
- Technical connectivity with panelist/filmmakers was a challenge for Dr. Lanois. Sound issues were also a challenge. Only he can share with you if these were serious issues or minor annoyances.
- Dr. Lanois carried the Film Festival alone dealing with the equipment and technology as well as knowing the schedule of filmmakers and films. He did work with Renaissance Hotel technicians to resolve some of the technical challenges, but I am not sure all of them were resolved to his satisfaction and successful connection to films and filmmakers. He went without meals and medication on some of the days of the Film Festival.
- Conference Attendees did seek out the Film Festival. Discussions were vibrant.

Recommendations:

- The primary issue with the Film Festival was personnel. Dr. Lanois provided the equipment, served as the principal technician, commuted between home, the hotel, and at least 2 panel sessions that he was also on. He resolved technical issues, introduced filmmakers, juggled scheduling a little due to a technical problem and was present in Montgomery 3 from morning to late night.
- Lanois assistant did stand in for him on occasion and did help with technical issues.
- Woodson Scholars and Montgomery. Alabama volunteers also stepped in when Lanois had to go home, attend a panel, or just take a break.
- I was asked to ride herd on the Film Festival at the tail end of planning with not much information on the content of films, persons presenting, and no technical know-how. I did help with room security, answered some questions from attendees and pulled people into the room on a few occasions.
- This committee probably needs 3 people who know what, when, why, how, who, and where. Out of the 3 at least 2 need to be physically present for the Film Festival so that one lone ranger is not technician, commentator, and knows where the bodies are buried. Lanois did yeoman work alone partially putting his health in jeopardy. The committee lost its personnel because of the arrival of a new life for one of the organizers.

All in all, the Film Festival appears to have been another rousing success. Technology will be the key to this part of ASALH annual meeting and organizing by specialists with the contacts and technical know-how to connect the filmmaker to the ASALH audience both at the conference and over the airwaves.

Gregory Mixon

October 18, 2022