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Elegba Folklore Society Announces Schedule for Juneteenth Celebration Renowned Historian, Tony Browder, to Headline Weekend with Symposium

RICHMOND, Va. (June 5, 2017) – Richmond's Cultural Ambassador, Elegba Folklore Society (EFS), will present "**Juneteenth 2017, A Freedom Celebration**" on **June 16-18** with weekend-long cultural and educational programs. **This year's event will include The Symposium featuring renowned historian, author, decoder, archeologist and Egyptologist, Anthony T. Browder; Juneteenth Backyard Party; and a ceremony for Ancestral Homage held at the African Burial Ground.** Juneteenth, regarded as the first African American holiday, became a traditional celebration when, on June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger sailed into Galveston (Texas) harbor and issued a proclamation giving freedom to approximately 250,000 blacks in Texas still in bondage 2 ½ years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was enacted on Jan. 1, 1863. EFS's goal is to educate event participants about this independence holiday for African Americans, the rich history of Africans and their descendants in America and to celebrate cultural togetherness.

"The Juneteenth Freedom Celebration is about acknowledgment and celebration of our African ancestors' independence from bondage," said Janine Bell, president and artistic director of Elegba Folklore Society. "Today, more than ever, there is a much needed, enhanced level of cultural understanding that can bring clarity to our lives and our journey. Juneteenth commemorates the physical liberation but focuses in on the pursuit of mental and spiritual liberation that many have yet to achieve as African descendants trying to find or maintain a sense of identity and purpose in America. As an attendee once said, 'Juneteenth makes us whole.' "

The anticipated three-day event kicks off on Friday, June 16 with **The Symposium** where **Anthony T. Browder**, internationally recognized historian, author, decoder, archeologist and Egyptologist will speak on "**Africans in America and the Paradox of Liberty.**" The Symposium will explore the self-determination of Africans in America (African Americans), the influences of Thomas Jefferson plus archeological discoveries in Kemet that help reconnect a cultural circle of life. Accordingly, Browder will demonstrate a historical and genetic connection between Africans along the Nile, Niger, Mississippi, Potomac and James Rivers. **Tickets are one for \$15 or two for \$28. Advance ticket discounts are available [here](#).**

The Symposium will be held at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School located at 1000 Mosby Street in Richmond. Recently, the adjacent public housing complex, Mosby Court, has been plagued with violence that is deeply rooted in the self-hate that stems from the cultural disarray of historical trauma. The event seeks to support in the healing of the community through its message of self-determination and cultural awareness. Ample free parking is available.

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On June 17, participants will celebrate African American independence with the **Juneteenth Backyard Party**. Entire families are encouraged to attend and will experience freedom day with history, good food, the Get Woke Youth Summit on cultural education, heritage crafts for children, jump rope and hoola hoop contests, more good food, African dance and drum workshops, experiences on the Trail of Enslaved Africans, shopping in The Freedom Market and Elegba Folklore Society's performing company. **This event is free to the public** and will be held on the **Manchester Dock located at 1308 Brander St. in Richmond from 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.** Ample free parking is available.

To culminate the weekend celebration, a cultural ceremony to honor African ancestors will be held on Sunday, June 18 **from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the African Burial Ground located at 16th & East Broad Streets in Richmond**. The rituals of the Motherland will refresh guests and open spirit as gatherers say, "thank you" to African ancestors. Guests will pay homage in ceremony, drumming and song. Participants are encouraged to bring an offering for the altar and wear white or African attire. **This event is also free to the public**. Ample free parking is available in the VCU A Lot on East Broad and 17th Streets.

The City of Richmond, Dominion Energy, and Croaker's Spot, along with Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities, James River Park System, and Richmond Department of Economic and Community Development, sponsor **Juneteenth 2017, A Freedom Celebration**. CultureWorks provides partial support.

For tickets or more information, visit <http://efsinc.org> or the cultural center at 101 E. Broad St. in the Downtown Richmond Arts District or directly contact Elegba Folklore Society at (804) 644-3900 or at story1@efsinc.org.

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The Elegba Folklore Society is a year-round, lively celebration of African and African American culture. Enjoy art and imports in our cultural center. Sway with our performance company in the warmth and feel of an African village. Awaken your spirit! Or, participate in a guided heritage tour along the Trail of Enslaved Africans and other notable sites. The Capital City Kwanzaa Festival, Down Home Family Reunion, a Celebration of African American Folk Life, and Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration are events that have delighted audiences for 27 years. The Society offers the best in African Diasporic cultural experiences, promoting an understanding of the present by valuing the past.