Juneteenth 2019

A Freedom Celebration

Media Release

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Juneteenth 2019, A Freedom Celebration
To Be Presented in Richmond, Virginia

Elegba Folklore Society presents Juneteenth 2019, A Freedom Celebration in Richmond, Virginia, June 14 - 16. The theme, 400 Years, acknowledges and ponders the four recorded centuries of the African, and later, African American presence in America, 1619-2019.

This three-part event features The Symposium on Friday, June 14 at Main Street Station, 1500 E Main Street, 23219. Doors open at 6:00p, and the stage at 7:00p. Advance tickets are $10, single and $18, couple, general admission. At the door, general admission tickets are $11, single and $20, couple, general admission. Tickets for students, 12 -18, are $5 and children under 12 are admitted free of charge in advance and at the door.

On Saturday, June 15, Independence Day Our Way happens beginning at 3:00p at the Manchester Dock and along the Trail of Enslaved Africans. Admission is free.

Homage to the Ancestors concludes the Juneteenth observance on Sunday, June 16 at the African Burial Ground at 3:00p. Admission is free.

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Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, founder and president of the Philadelphia-based Molefi Kete Asante Institute for Afrocentric Studies, professor and chair of the Department of Africology & African American Studies at Temple University and author of nearly 100 books and 500 articles on Pan-African affairs, will keynote The Symposium. Elegba Folklore Society’s performers will also appear. There will be live jazz by Papa Rule, refreshments and The Freedom Market will be open all night.

Dr. Molefi Kete Asante is a leading authority on African culture and philosophy. The Molefi Kete Asante Institute for Afrocentric Studies seeks to insure that the assertion of African cultural values and traditions will become a standard part of any design involving the cultural, health, social, economic, spiritual or political discourses about black people. Its programs intend to to elevate the reporting of factual information about the condition of the African world.

Since 1984, Dr. Asante has served at Temple University. There, in 1986, he founded the first Ph.D. program in African American Studies in the nation. In 1996 he was enstooled as the Kyidomhene of Tafo in Ghana, and in 2011, he was made a Wanadu of the Court of Amiru Hassimi Maiga of the Songhai Kingdom in Mali.

One of his hallmark publications is Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change, the first of a quartet of books mandating that Africans be viewed as subjects rather than objects. He says, “I chose the term Afrocentricity to emphasize the fact...Africans were not simply removed from Africa to the Americas, but Africans were separated from philosophies, languages, religions, myths and cultures. Finding a way to...reorient our thinking was essential to the presentation of an African cultural reality.” expressing Dr Asante’s intention that African Americans can bring more to the table of humanity that just the adaptive experiences of Europeans.

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Attendees can also enjoy the exhibition, *Unbound 2019: Truth & Reconciliation* by the Richmond Slave Trail Commission in partnership with Norfolk State University.

The next day, *Juneteenth 2019, A Freedom Celebration* moves to the Manchester Dock, 1308 Brander Street, 23224, for *Independence Day Our Way*. Families are invited to an independence day celebration like no other. Enjoy music curated by the party master DJ Drake, spiced with history and social justice commentaries. Dr. Asante will lead the featured, *Get Woke Youth Summit* on cultural education for ages 10 - 20. There will also be heritage crafts for the children, jump rope and hula hoop contests, African dance and drum workshops for all, good food plus shopping in The Freedom Market. Elegba Folklore Society’s performers provide important cultural context for exploring African heritage and for examining the American enslavement of African people, and the event culminates with the Annual Torch Lit Night Walk on the Trail of Enslaved Africans.

On Sunday, West African spirit rituals and ceremony refresh and invite an openness to say “thank you.” Led by Virginia Ile (ee - lay) of the Obafemi Institute for the Divine Study of Ifa (O.I.D.S.I.), it’s *Homage to the Ancestors* at the African Burial Ground, 16th and Broad Streets, in ceremony, drumming and song. Attendees may bring an offering for the altar. White or African attire is requested.

*Juneteenth 2019, A Freedom Celebration* is a family event. It commemorates the Juneteenth holiday known as *Juneteenth National Freedom Day* by remembering the impact of the trade of enslaved Africans in Virginia, during the 246 years between 1619 and 1865 — and now the 400 years from 1619 to 2019 — and its legacy. A constructive way to pay homage to enslaved Africans upon whose backbone Virginia was sustained, from the twelfth year following English settlement, *Juneteenth 2019, A Freedom Celebration* re-examines the legacy of their contribution and their forfeiture. It provides a cultural framework for building bridges of understanding.
Janine Bell, President and Artistic Director of the Elegba Folklore Society, appreciates the cultural enrichment Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration gives. She says, “This event is about acknowledgment. Africans who were brought to Richmond to live out their lives in bondage here and in other states have not been properly acknowledged. In one example, the multi-billion dollar, multi-national tobacco industry was built on their backs neither to their own benefit or the benefit of their descendants. Now, Africa’s children with the children of European captors can reclaim and understand hidden history. An enhanced level of understanding can bring needed clarity to our lives today.”

Attendees may come as they are, and African attire is encouraged. Comfortable shoes and a bottle of water for the Walk are suggested. Free parking is available at the Manchester Dock. Shuttle buses will be available for attendees after the Walk and so that elders and those with disabilities can participate fully in the entire experience.

For tickets or more information visit www.efsinc.org, visit Elegba Folklore Society’s Cultural Center, 101 E. Broad Street in the downtown RVA Arts District or contact the Elegba Folklore Society at 804/644-3900 or at story1@efsinc.org. Background about the holiday and directions follow.

Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration was one of the international signature events of the United Nations’ International Year for People of African Descent. An excerpt of the declaration says, “The international community has affirmed that the transatlantic slave trade was an appalling tragedy not only because of its barbarism but also because of its magnitude, organized nature and negation of the essential humanity of the victims.... Even today, Africans and people of African descent continue to suffer the consequences of these acts and should be fully integrated into social, economic and political life and at all levels of decision-making.” More at: www.un.org.

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The City of Richmond, Dominion Energy and Richmond Region Tourism along with Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities and James River Park System sponsor Juneteenth 2019, A Freedom Celebration. The Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium provides partial support.

Click here for images.

DIRECTIONS TO MANCHESTER DOCK

From I-95 South: Exit at #73, Maury Street. At the bottom of the ramp turn right. This is an industrial area. Continue just a few blocks up and over the big railroad tracks. Drive through the opening in the floodwall. When you come to the fork in the road, bear left. The road will curve and be intersected by a smaller railroad crossing. As you enter the parking area, bear left and park.

From I-95 North: Exit at #73, Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

From I-64 West: Exit at #190, I-95 South and 5th Street. Follow I-95 South. Exit at #73, Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

From I-64 East: I-64 merges with I-95 South. Follow it and exit at #73, Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

Local: Access Southside via the Manchester Bridge; turn left on Maury Street. From the 14th Street (Mayo) Bridge, turn left on E. 3rd Street, cross several blocks and turn left again on Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

Manchester Dock (aka Ancarrow’s Boat Landing)
1308 Brander Street
Richmond, VA 23224
The History of Juneteenth

*Juneteenth* is a freedom celebration that became a tradition when, on June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger sailed into Galveston harbor and issued a proclamation that gave freedom to a quarter of a million blacks in Texas who were still in bondage 2 1/2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation that President Abraham Lincoln issued was enacted on January 1, 1863. The tradition is so firmly rooted in Texas that it was made a state holiday in 1980, and *Juneteenth* has come to be regarded as the earliest African American holiday.

The freedom message reached different parts of America on various dates between 1863 and 1865, such as January 1 in Virginia, but migrated black Texans continued the *Juneteenth* celebration as they moved to cities in the North and across the country. Today, this holiday is observed from California to New York.

Therefore, an instructive way of uniting these commemorations in a day of national importance is through *Juneteenth National Freedom Day*.


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