

Savannah State University Announces
2017 Heritage Festival-
REVISED 11-6-16



SAVANNAH – **“Focusing on the Future; Acknowledging Echoes from the Past”** is the central theme of the 2017 Savannah Black Heritage Festival scheduled for February 1 -- 26, 2017. Each year the festival, which is sponsored by Savannah State University (SSU) and the City of Savannah’s Department of Cultural Affairs, presents activities for every age and interest. Cultural education and exposure to the performing and visual arts, as well as ethnic cuisine, crafts, fun and family are emphasized throughout the celebration. Great music of every genre, dance performances, national and regional recording artists, local youth talent showcases, historic tours, visual art exhibitions by internationally acclaimed and local artists, the W.W. Law Lecture, spoken word and dramatic productions are all included on the schedule. In addition, educational opportunities are provided through a health and wellness fair, a health walk, culinary arts activities and youth programs.

A special featured activity this year will be the **Echoes Walks** into Savannah's African American history. The Walks are scheduled for Saturdays, February 4, 18 and 25. Each Walk will be conducted by one of the three (3) local African American tour company owners and include visits to historic areas in East Savannah, Historic Savannah and West Savannah, **sequentially**, where events significant to contributions made by African Americans to the history and cultural development of Savannah took place. The Walks will also incorporate a health component in conjunction with “Walk Georgia” where the mileage distance for each walk will be measured for those who want to gain both historical facts and “fitbit” points.

Opening events for the festival will include the traditional dance performance. **The Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble** of Denver, CO, will return as the featured dance group for the 28th Annual Festival. A new procedure for admission to the evening dance performance will be employed on a trial basis in 2017. **FREE GENERAL ADMISSION TICKETS FOR THE EVENING PERFORMANCE WILL NOT BE REQUIRED. THEREFORE FREE TICKETS WILL NOT BE ISSUED AT THE USUAL DISTRIBUTION CENTERS.** Admission will be on a first-come, first-seated basis. This new procedure will be tested in an effort to attract larger numbers of youth groups, family and organization members, as well as visitors to the city who can witness the performance. There will be a limited reserved-seat section for Military families and Seniors which will be released 10 minutes prior to curtain call. On the evening preceding Friday’s public performance, the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble will once again engage the community with a public conversation at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, February 2, highlighting African-American cultural and historical influences upon choreographing a dance repertoire. In addition, the ensemble will conduct school and community dance workshops during their visit. **Presentation of the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble is made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.**

For the first time, a special display of **The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum** traveling exhibition will be at the Beach Institute African American Cultural Center, February 4-8, 2017, and the **Earl Shihoster Youth Leadership Institute** will facilitate its 5th Annual youth forum, *“Continuing the Legacy of Community Leadership.”* The **Bright Star Children’s Touring Theatre** of Asheville, N.C., will also return and present multiple performances of their new productions, *The Greatest: Sports Heroes A to Z; Black History Heroes, Soldiers and Spies; and Meet Dr. King,*. Also on the schedule is the festival’s **9th Annual Future of Jazz Concert** featuring young jazz instrumentalists and vocalists who are enrolled in music programs from middle school to graduate school. The concert will include the 4th annual tribute to the late Ben Tucker.

Grand Festival Day, a favorite family--fun event packed with activities and top entertainment, will be held at the Savannah Civic Center on Saturday, February 11, followed on Sunday, February 12 with the annual **Gospel Concert** featuring top-named gospel artists.

The 2017 festival will be the 18th one produced by Savannah State University and the 28th sponsored by the City of Savannah. All festival events and activities are free of admission and open to the public.

Established in 1890, Savannah State University is the oldest public historically black college or university in Georgia and the oldest institution of higher learning in the city of Savannah. The university’s 4,900 students select majors from three colleges — Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Business Administration and Sciences and Technology — and the School of Teacher Education.

For more information, call (912) 358--4309, or visit www.savannahblackheritagefestival.com for updates.

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