



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Black History Month Programming to air on Western Reserve PBS

KENT, Ohio — Monday, Jan. 12, 2009 — Western Reserve PBS celebrates Black History Month in February with programming that emphasizes the resilience of the African-American spirit. Presented here is the month's black history programming, with shows airing for the first time marked with an asterisk (*).

African American Lives 2

Tuesdays in February at 10 p.m.

The critically acclaimed PBS broadcasts **African American Lives** (2006) and **Oprah's Roots** (2007) shone a national spotlight on the powerful process of discovering one's family history. Now, Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. guides another group on a journey to discover their ancestry: poet Maya Angelou; author Bliss Broyard; actor Don Cheadle; actor Morgan Freeman; theologian Peter Gomes; college administrator Kathleen Henderson; publisher Linda Johnson Rice; radio host Tom Joyner; athlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey; comedian Chris Rock; and rock 'n' roll legend Tina Turner. The four-part series draws on DNA analysis, genealogical research and family oral tradition to trace the lineages of the participants down through U.S. history and back to Africa.

***Independent Lens, Adjust Your Color: The Truth About Petey Green**

Saturday, Feb. 7 at 11 p.m.

America's original shock-jock, Petey Greene overcame poverty, drug addiction and prison time to "tell it like it is," shocking and entertaining everyone from the ghetto to the White House. Narrated by Don Cheadle, **Adjust Your Color** looks at how his explosive language and brash style unsettled the establishment as he battled both the system and his own demons on a journey to becoming a leading activist during some of the most tumultuous years in recent history.

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Eyes on the Prize

Sundays, Feb. 8 to Feb. 22 at noon

The groundbreaking documentary series examining America's civil rights years returns to public television. Covering the period from the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till in Money, Miss., and the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott through school desegregation, the march from Selma to Montgomery and the Voting Rights Act, **Eyes on the Prize** is considered classic documentary filmmaking and the definitive history of this formative time in the nation's life.

***The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln: American Experience**

Monday, Feb. 9 at 9 p.m.

On March 4, 1865, at the United States Capitol, a crowd of 50,000 listened as President Lincoln delivered his classic second inaugural address, urging charity and forgiveness to a nation in the final throes of war. Just two months later, a train, nine cars long and draped in black bunting, pulled slowly out of a station in Washington, DC. Dignitaries and government officials crowded the first eight cars. In the ninth rode the body of Abraham Lincoln — America's first assassinated president.

The Story of Oscar Brown Jr.

Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 8 p.m.

This documentary focuses on Chicago native Oscar Brown Jr.'s work as a writer and performer for over a half a century. Starting at the tender age of 15 he was a radio performer with the network series "Secret City." He also was a key player in Richard Durham's "Destination Freedom: Black Radio Days" series from 1948-1950. Brown's musical explorations included sharing the bill with such greats as Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane, Nancy Wilson and Cannonball Adderley. His one-man show — Oscar Brown Jr. Entertains — led one critic to hail him as "a musical genius." In 1967, he produced the musical Opportunity Please Knock in conjunction with a huge youth gang known as the Blackstone Rangers and gained national recognition when gang members appeared on the Smothers Brothers CBS television show.

***Looking for Lincoln**

Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 9 p.m.

This program dissects the myths that have grown up around Abraham Lincoln. In doing so, the program addresses outstanding questions — about race, equality, religion and depression — by carefully interpreting the evidence provided by people who actually knew him. Henry Louis Gates Jr. hosts.

***Independent Lens, Tulia, Texas**

Saturday, Feb. 14 at 11 p.m.

In 1999 undercover narcotics agent Thomas Coleman executed one of the biggest drug stings in Texas history. Coleman and his drug task force arrested 46 Tulia residents — of whom 39 were African American — on charges of suspected drug dealing. **Tulia, Texas** is the story of a small town's search for justice and the price Americans pay for the nation's war on drugs.

Sisters of Selma: Bearing Witness for Change

Monday, Feb. 16 at 9 p.m.

This program is an unabashedly spiritual take on the Selma, Ala., voting rights marches of 1965 from some of its unsung foot soldiers: Catholic nuns. Following the violence of "Bloody Sunday," sisters from around the country answered Dr. Martin Luther King's call to join the protests in Selma. Never before in American history had avowed Catholic women made so public a political statement. Risking personal safety to bring change, the sisters found themselves being changed in turn. Selma blacks testify about the importance of Catholic clergy in their lives.

***Simon Schama's Rough Crossings**

Monday, Feb. 16 at 10 p.m.

Rough Crossings is the astonishing story of the struggle to freedom by thousands of African American slaves who fled the plantations to fight behind British lines in the American Revolution. With gripping, powerfully vivid story-telling, Simon Schama follows the escaped blacks into the fires of the war, and into freezing, inhospitable Nova Scotia where many who served the Crown were betrayed in their promises to receive land at the war's end.

Independent Lens, Billy Strayhorn: Lush Life

Saturday, Feb. 21 at 11 p.m.

As Duke Ellington's co-composer, arranger and right-hand man, Billy Strayhorn wrote some of the greatest American music of the 20th century. But as a gay man in the 1940s and '50s, Strayhorn had to lead a discreet existence, while Ellington played to thunderous applause on center stage. This film tells the story of the unheralded man who changed jazz and popular music forever, maintaining artistic and personal integrity while challenging prejudice along the way.

Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson

Monday, Feb. 23 at 1 a.m.

This film by Ken Burns chronicles the life and career of boxer Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight champion and one of the greatest fighters of the 20th century. The film won 2005 Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Nonfiction Special and Outstanding Voice-Over Performance.

About Western Reserve Public Media

Western Reserve Public Media (formerly PBS 45 & 49) is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation and consortium of Kent State University, The University of Akron and Youngstown State University. A trusted community resource, Western Reserve Public Media uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire. Western Reserve PBS, a service of the organization, is the only broadcast television service that reaches all of northeast Ohio. It is available to 1.8 million households and 4.4 million people in the Cleveland and Youngstown designated market areas. In an average week, over 500,000 households tune in. Through funding from eTech Ohio, Western Reserve Public Media provides K-12 educational technology training and instructional television programming to 21,500 educators and 256,700 students in eight Ohio counties. For more information about the organization, visit www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org or call 1-800-554-4549.

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