



news release

Contact: Diane Steinert, Communications Coordinator
330-677-4549 or dsteinert@WesternReservePublicMedia.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Black History Month Programming to Air On Western Reserve PBS

KENT, Ohio — Friday, Jan. 29, 2010 — 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 (*). Local funding for Black History Month programming on Western Reserve PBS is provided by Summa Health System and the law firm of Ulmer & Berne.

***Independent Lens, Herskovits at the Heart of Blackness**

Saturday, Feb. 6, at 11 p.m.

Using photomontage re-creations, interviews, animation, original field footage and recordings, this film examines the forgotten legacy of Melville Herskovits. The controversial Jewish anthropologist's writings in the 1940s and '50s challenged widely held assumptions about race and culture by insisting that we look at the world through each other's lives and histories.

Prince Among Slaves

Sunday, Feb. 7, at 1 p.m.

The inspiring true story of an African prince who survived 40 years of enslavement in America before finally regaining his freedom. Winner of the Best Documentary at the 2007 American Black Film Festival, **Prince Among Slaves** tells the compelling story of Abdul Rahman, an African Muslim prince, through feature-film styled re-enactments directed by Andrea Kalin and Emmy-Award-winner Bill Duke; contemporary artworks, archival letters and diaries; and on-camera interviews with distinguished scholars and experts. Narrated by actor and hip-hop artist Mos Def; based on Dr. Terry Alford's biography of the same name.

***For Love of Liberty: The Story of America's Black Patriots**

Sundays, Feb. 7 and Feb. 14, at 3 p.m.

Five years before the Revolution, Boston citizens confronted a squad of English soldiers. A black man took control of the protest and challenged the Redcoats. The British raised their weapons and fired. In that one volley, Crispus Attucks, an

-more-



escaped slave, became the first man to give his life for a cause that would become the American Revolution. Years later, Thomas Jefferson immortalized his sacrifice when he wrote; “The blood of Attucks nourished the tree of liberty.” Ten years in the making, this two-part series uses letters, diaries, speeches, journalistic accounts, historical text and military records to document and acknowledge the sacrifices and accomplishments of African-American service men and women since the earliest days of the republic.

Great Performances, Harlem in Montmartre

Sunday, Feb. 7, at 10 p.m.

This musical documentary tells the story of the jazz age in Paris between the First and Second World Wars, exploring a fascinating yet often neglected era in African-American cultural history. After peace was signed at Versailles, many black Americans remained in Europe rather than return to the brutal segregation and racism of America; over the next two decades, they created an expatriate community of musicians, entertainers and entrepreneurs, primarily congregating in Paris’ hilly Montmartre neighborhood. Some achieved enduring fame, while others faded into history. Inspired by William A. Shack’s book and using rare archival material from both France and America, this remarkable documentary features footage of such key figures as James Reese Europe, Josephine Baker, Sidney Bechet, Bricktop, Eugene Bullard, Django Reinhardt and many more.

In Performance at the White House, A Celebration of Music From the Civil Rights Movement

Thursday, Feb. 11, at 8 p.m.

President and Mrs. Obama host this concert in the White House East Room in celebration of Black History Month. The music special includes Jennifer Hudson, John Legend, Seal, Smokey Robinson and Blind Boys of Alabama.

Red Tail Reborn

Sunday, Feb. 21, at 1 p.m.

Amidst racial naysayers during World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen, the first and only black fighter pilots, were commissioned in 1941 to help defend the distressed bombers in the European theater. This film tells their story and the story of people who strive to educate Americans about the airmen and their signature planes with a distinctive red tail.

American Masters, Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun

Monday, Feb. 22, at 10 p.m.

Writer, cultural anthropologist, chronicler of folk roots and ethnic traditions, daughter of a former slave, Hurston was one of the most celebrated — and most controversial — figures of the Harlem Renaissance, the creatively expansive era in the 1920s when “the Negro was in vogue.” She attained unique success in all areas, but her words and her conclusions were often mired in contention — she was called everything from flamboyant to outrageous, unpredictable to bodacious. She collaborated with Langston Hughes, was criticized by Richard Wright and ultimately died a pauper’s death in total obscurity. Now considered a lioness of African-American literature, she was resurrected by Alice Walker; such works as “Dust Tracks on a Road” and “Their Eyes Were Watching God” are essential reading today.

Independent Lens, Behind the Rainbow

Saturday, Feb. 27, at 11 p.m.

Over two tumultuous decades, South Africa has finally arrived on its own bumpy road to democracy. With the 2009 presidential election looming as a historical turning point, **Behind the Rainbow** is a previously untold account of the country's political problems, struggles and realities.

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. The organization also operates three standard definition channels, Fusion (WNEO.2/WEAO.2), MHz Worldview (WNEO.3/WEAO.3) and V-me (WNEO.4/WEAO.4).

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.

##