

LAN TEAM@DOI

02/05/2003 10:04 AM  
Please respond to

To:  
cc:  
Subject: ALL EMPLOYEE MESSAGE Nationwide - National African American  
History Month Observance, 2003

(Note to Supervisors: Please ensure that employees without access to electronic mail receive a paper copy of this message.)

February 5, 2003

MEMORANDUM

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: J. Michael Trujillo (*signed*)  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Human Resources and Workforce Diversity

Subject: National African American History Month Observance, 2003

As part of the Department of the Interior's Special Emphasis Observance Program, we will join the Nation in observing the month of February as National African American History Month. During African American History Month, we celebrate the rich cultural traditions and legacy and recognize the many achievements and contributions made by African Americans in the history of our Nation.

The national theme for this year's observance is "**The Souls of Black Folk: Centennial Reflections.**" As President Bush stated in the attached proclamation, this year's observance calls for the Nation's attention to the continuing need to battle racism and to build a society where every person, of every race, can realize the promise of America.

The DOI observance for African American History Month will be held on February 21, 2003, at 10:00 a.m., in the Main Interior Building, Sidney Yates Auditorium. The program's keynote speaker is Honorable Roscoe C. Howard, Jr., US Attorney, District of Columbia. The program will also feature musical entertainment by Mrs. Virginia Hayes Williams (mother of Washington, DC Mayor, the Honorable Anthony Williams), accompanied by Melvin Miles of AJQ, The AJQ Jazz Quorum, and Lady Byron, Virtuoso Organist/Pianist, with Paris Hines, Jazz Vocalist.

DOI managers and supervisors are encouraged to allow all employees to participate in ceremonies and activities in observance of African American History Month, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission's Town Hall meeting in Washington, DC, on Tuesday, February 11, and the exhibit showcasing the African American Coal Culture of Southern Illinois opening ceremony on February 13. Again, we encourage Bureaus and Offices to conduct activities in the field

throughout the month of February.

Attachment

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For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
January 31, 2003

### **National African American History Month, 2003**

By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation

African Americans have played central roles in some of the most triumphant and courageous moments in our Nation's history. During National African American History Month, we honor the rich heritage of African Americans and pay tribute to their many contributions to our Nation. As we celebrate this year's theme, "The Souls of Black Folk: Centennial Reflections," we remember the successes and challenges of our past. We also resolve to honor the achievements and legacy of these proud citizens by continuing to improve our society so that it fully lives up to our founding ideals.

In 1915, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson recognized the need for our country to gain a more complete and informed understanding of our past. He founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and established the first Negro History Week to emphasize that "We have a wonderful history behind us . . ." Through the pioneering efforts of Dr. Woodson and the hard work of the Association, this observance officially became Black History Month in 1976.

For generations, African Americans have strengthened our Nation by urging reforms, overcoming obstacles, and breaking down barriers. We see the greatness of America in those who have risen above injustice and enriched our society, a greatness reflected in the resolve of Jackie Robinson, the intellect of W.E.B. DuBois, and the talent of Louis Armstrong. We also gain a deeper appreciation for the African American experience in the writings of James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Zora Neal Hurston, as well as in the music of Mahalia Jackson, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, and countless others.

African Americans reflect a proud legacy of courage and dedication that has helped to guide our Nation's success and prosperity. Visionary leaders like Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King, Jr., possessed a clarity of purpose and were instrumental in exposing and addressing the issues that threatened our founding principles. The battle for freedom, equality, and opportunity was fought on the front lines by strong figures such as Harriet Tubman and Fannie Lou Hamer, as well as many other everyday heroes who helped to lead this Nation to a more hopeful and just society.

As we recall these remarkable individuals, we also recognize that, despite our progress, racial prejudice still exists in America. As a Nation and as individuals, we must be vigilant in

responding to discrimination wherever we find it. By promoting diversity, understanding, and opportunity, we will continue our efforts to build a society where every person, of every race, can realize the promise of America.

This month, I encourage all citizens to gain awareness of and appreciation for African-American history. As we remember this important part of our Nation's past, we look to a bright future, recognizing the potential of an America united in purpose, guided by spirit, and dedicated to equality.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2003 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all of the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that highlight and honor the myriad of contributions that African Americans have made to our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtyfirst day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentyseventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

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