

2024 African-American History Month Lecture and Culture Series

# 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ESSAY/ORATORY CONTEST



THEME

## AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE ARTS

BEARING SORROW, FINDING JOY

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Wed., Feb. 21, 2024

by 10pm CT,  
essays must be  
submitted on eCourses

Essay Submission Portal



Mon., Feb. 26, 2024

Essay Finalists will notified  
and sent information  
for oratory clinic

### ORATORY SHOWCASE

Thursday, February 29, 2024

6:30pm | Don Clark Building Auditorium

The showcase will feature 5 essay finalists

#### THEME CONTEXT

Boldly and bravely persons of African Americans, and persons from Africa and the diaspora have raised their voices in protest of all forms of oppression, suppression, and repression. Too often not enough attention is paid to some very important members of society—namely, African Americans in the Arts. As the theme of the 10th Annual Essay Contest states, they have born the sorrows and often simultaneously lifted their people in joy through music, theatre, dance, poetry, fiction, film, fashion, sculpture, painting, the crafts, architecture, et cetera.

As the Association for the Study of African American Life and History states in its presentation of the 2024 Black History Theme, African Americans and the Arts, "artists and cultural movements such as the New Negro, Black Arts, the Black Renaissance, hip-hop, and Afrofuturism, have been led by people of African descent and set the standard for popular trends around the world."

In your essay, explore African Americans and the Arts and illustrate the manner in which in varied forms of artistic expression select artists dealt with sorrow of disenfranchisement, abuse and misuse of a people and how select artists, some of the same ones produced exquisite beauty and meaning, finding for themselves and others that pain would not be allowed to steal their joy. Clearly and profoundly, make the case that scores of African American artists had a profound impact on the survival and persistence, hopes and beliefs of a people who despite it all would not be denied their pride, their faith, their belief that Black people matter and matter greatly.

CASH PRIZES: 1<sup>st</sup>: \$3000, 2<sup>nd</sup>: \$2500, 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$2000

For more information, email [Dr. E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith](mailto:Dr.E.JoahanneThomas-Smith) or  
visit the [Essay Oratory Contest Website](#)

For special assistance with disabilities, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 936-261-3585

Contest Open to Undergraduate Students Only



PRAIRIE VIEW  
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