

Juneteenth

A Freedom Celebration 2009

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“JUNETEENTH, A FREEDOM CELEBRATION 2009” TO BE PRESENTED

Richmond, Virginia • Richmond’s Cultural Ambassador, Elegba Folklore Society will present *Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration 2009* in a two-day event, June 20 – 21. The historic **Manchester Dock**, a port of entry in Richmond for Africans being brought into the Americas to be sold into slavery, is the site for **Saturday, June 21, beginning at 3:00pm**. The thematic is Walking in our Ancestors’ Footsteps. The Manchester Dock is on the south side of the James River at the end of Maury Street. Directions follow. This commemoration of *Juneteenth National Freedom Day* will feature **Dr. Julius Garvey**, the son of the Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a founding member and **chairman of the Marcus Garvey Committee International, Inc., an organization that serves to improve the economic, cultural, educational, and spiritual condition of Africans all over the world**. It will include a **community African dance class**, panel discussions, ceremonies, performances, The Freedom Market featuring food, art and imports along with special activities for children.

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Presented by

Elegba Folklore Society
Richmond’s Cultural Ambassador
Embrace the Spirit!

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In Cooperation with Richmond Slave Trail Commission

JUNETEENTH/222

This first day of *Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration 2009* will culminate in the Annual Torch Lit Walk on the Trail of Enslaved Africans, about 7pm, led by Elegba Folklore Society's performers with African dance and music and staged interpretations happening at the Dock, at the Canal Walk's Turning Basin, the Reconciliation Statue, at the site of the infamous Lumpkin's Jail in Shockoe Bottom and at the Burial Ground for Negroes at 16th and Broad Streets. **The Richmond Slave Trail Commission is marking these significant sites for acknowledgment and education.**

On Sunday, Elegba Folklore Society invites the public to its Cultural Center, downtown at 1st and Broad Streets, where *Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration 2009* features the opening reception of The Fathers of Benin. This exhibition of grand bronze sculptures is a premier of *The Pilgrim Collection* of the royal art of Benin. It also provides a cultural and historical context for the Triangular Trade Route of Enslaved Africans, Liverpool/Benin/Richmond. The reception's hours are 3:00 - 5:00pm. The Fathers of Benin will be on view through July 31.

Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration 2009 is a family event. It commemorates the Juneteenth holiday known as Juneteenth National Freedom Day by remembering the impact of the trade of enslaved Africans in Virginia, during the 246 years between 1619 and 1865 and its legacy. A constructive way to pay homage to enslaved Africans upon whose backbone Virginia was sustained from the twelfth year following the English settlement, *Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration 2009* re-examines the legacy of their contribution and their forfeiture. It provides a cultural framework for building bridges of understanding. **Admission is free both days.**

During *Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration 2009* elder statesman, **the Honorable Henry L. Marsh, will be honored** for his successful efforts to broaden awareness of

Juneteenth National Freedom Day throughout the Commonwealth.

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In addition to chairing the Marcus Garvey Committee International, Inc., Dr. Garvey serves on the Boards of various other organizations such as the Board for the Education of People of African Ancestry. Over the years, he has worked in conjunction with the various ministries, departments of corrections and the University of the West Indies in his native Jamaica on issues concerning youth education, building schools, transferring of books and medical supplies and a medical student exchange program. Dr. Garvey lectures on African history and culture and on the legacy of Marcus Garvey in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean. His audience includes junior high school, high school and college students, as well as social communities, religious, political and national organizations. Dr. Garvey is a physician at Long Island Jewish Medical Center and continues to combine this with a busy vascular surgical practice and community service. An opportunity for public interchange will complement his remarks.

Lady E & the Blues Synsations will appear along with and captivating storyteller, J. Ron Fleming, emcee for the day. The Elegba Folklore Society's African dancers and drummers will also give an interactive performance and cultural context for the African experience in America. These artist/interpreters will also guide the Walk. Children will be engaged in fun, take-home learning activities.

The premiere exhibition of The Pilgrim Collection in The Fathers of Benin consists of eighteen objects and is considered to be one of the finest collections of the royal art of Benin. The art reflects the life of the Oba, or king, and is crafted with every attention to symbolism and detail according to the lost wax metal sculpting technique. The Oba rules with divine right and is believed to have spiritual powers, and these stories are told in the art. Among the works shown from the collection are heads of the

Oba and the Queen Mother. Other items from the collection that would be placed on the royal altar include figures of priests, warriors and court attendants. *It is possible that bronze sculptors came into Richmond to be sold into lifelong bondage. Richmond has the second largest collection of architectural metal works in the country.*

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Janine Bell, Founder and Artistic Director of the Elegba Folklore Society, appreciates the cultural enrichment *Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration* gives. She says, "This event is about acknowledgment. Africans who were brought to Richmond to live out their lives in bondage here and in other states have not been properly acknowledged. In one example, the multi-billion dollar, multi-national tobacco industry was built on their backs neither to their own benefit or the benefit of their descendents. Now Africa's children with the children of European slave owners can reclaim and understand hidden history. An enhanced level of understanding can bring needed clarity to our lives today."

Attendees may come as they are or wear African, RBG or period attire. Comfortable shoes and a bottle of water for the Walk are encouraged. Parking is available at the Manchester Dock and at Elegba Folklore Society's Cultural Center. Shuttle buses will be available for attendees after the Walk.

For more information visit www.efsinc.org or contact the Elegba Folklore Society at 804/644-3900 or at story1@efsinc.org. **Background about the holiday, program schedule and directions follow.**

The Richmond Slave Trail Commission endorses *Juneteenth, A Freedom Celebration 2008*. This body, whose chairwoman is the Honorable Delores McQuinn, is a community resource for the preservation of this history. Program sponsors are City of Richmond, Global Commerce Solutions, Inc., First Market Bank and Comcast. Virginia Commission for the Arts provides partial support along with Arts & Cultural Funding Consortium.

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T H E H I S T O R Y O F J U N E T E E N T H

Juneteenth is a freedom celebration that became a tradition when, on June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger sailed into Galveston harbor and issued a proclamation that gave freedom to a quarter of a million blacks in Texas who were still in bondage 2 1/2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. The tradition is so firmly rooted in Texas that it was made a state holiday in 1980, and *Juneteenth* has come to be regarded as the earliest African American holiday.

The freedom message reached different parts of America on various dates between 1863 and 1865, such as January 1 in Virginia, but migrated black Texans continued the *Juneteenth* celebration as they moved to cities in the North and across the country. Today, this holiday is observed from California to New York.

Therefore, an instructive way of uniting these commemorations in a day of national importance is through *Juneteenth National Freedom Day*.

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DIRECTIONS TO MANCHESTER DOCK

From I-95 South: Exit at #73, Maury Street. At the bottom of the ramp turn right. This is an industrial area. Continue just a few blocks up and over the big railroad tracks. Drive through the opening in the floodwall. When you come to the fork in the road, bear left. The road will curve and be intersected by a smaller railroad crossing. As you enter the parking area, bear left and park.

From I-95 North: Exit at #73, Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

From I-64 West: Exit at #190, I-95 South and 5th Street. Follow I-95 South. Exit at #73, Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

From I-64 East: I-64 merges with I-95 South. Follow it and exit at #73, Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

Local: Access Southside via the Manchester Bridge; turn left on Maury Street. From the 14th Street (Mayo) Bridge, turn left on E. 3rd Street, cross several blocks and turn left again on Maury Street. Follow the directions above.

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JUNETEENTH, A FREEDOM CELEBRATION 2009
PROGRAM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, JUNE 20 - MANCHESTER DOCK & THE TRAIL OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS

3:00

Native American & African Opening Ceremonies

African Dance Community Class

4:00

J. Ron Fleming, Storyteller

Mr. Fleming will tell for the family and emcee throughout the day.

5:00

Lady E & the Blues Synsations

5:45

Award Presentations

The Honorable Henry L Marsh is honored. Presentation made by the Honorable Delores McQuinn, Chairwoman, Richmond Slave Trail Commission

6:00

Dr Julius Garvey Speaks

Q & A moderated by Dr. Shawn Utsey, Chairman, VCU Dept of African American Studies & Co-Chairman of Elegba Folklore Society's Board of Directors

7:00

Elegba Folklore Society

African Dance, Music & the Oral Tradition give a cultural context for history.

8:00

Torch Lit Walk Along the Trail of Enslaved Africans

11:00

Healing Ceremony at the Burial Ground for Negroes

SUNDAY, JUNE 21 - ELEGBA FOLKLORE SOCIETY'S CULTURAL CENTER

3:00 – 5:00

Opening Reception and Gallery Talk, The Fathers of Benin