Celebrating Black History Month

University Communications
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The University will mark Black History Month in February with a cultural dance performance, a fireside chat with a daughter of a history-making Wildcat basketball coach, video profiles of Black student-athletes and more. The celebrations continue a year-round effort to honor the culture, contributions and accomplishments of the Black community on campus and in the community.

New leadership, new events and more

In addition to announcing that, beginning this year, Juneteenth will be observed as a paid holiday, President Robert C. Robbins also announced the "Beyond Juneteenth," initiative – a yearlong effort to promote awareness of the holiday and shine a spotlight on the impact Black Americans have had on Arizona and the Southwest.

In November, Robbins announced the search for the inaugural vice president and chief inclusion officer, who will oversee campus diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. Francisco Moreno, professor of psychiatry at the College of Medicine – Tucson and associate vice president for equity, diversity and inclusion for University of Arizona Health Sciences, is serving in the role on an interim basis.

"Your experiences matter. Your voices matter. Your journeys matter," Robbins wrote in the email. "Our diverse experiences and backgrounds are our strength at the University of Arizona, and we constantly are seeking ways to enhance our student support and outreach initiatives, our educational programs, and our essential resources to address the specific needs of our communities."

Robbins also announced that Lehman Benson, associate professor of management and organizations in the Eller College of Management, has been named vice president of Black advancement and engagement, and that Maria Franco was named vice president for Hispanic-Serving Institution initiatives. She had previously served as an assistant vice provost for HSI initiatives.

A new speaker series designed to highlight the experiences, expertise and creativity of Black people and foster a more inclusive campus culture for Black students and employees began in November. The series, titled "Out of This World: Afrofuturisms Expressions Across Science, Art, Technology and Design," continues on Jan. 25 with a presentation from Ruha Benjamin, a professor of African American studies and founding director of the Ida B. Wells JUST Data Lab at Princeton University. Ibrahim Thiaw, executive secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, will speak April 5.

Earlier this month, the African American Museum of Southern Arizona[14] opened in Room 244 of the Student Union Memorial Center. The museum includes exhibits about influential African Americans in Southern Arizona and significant moments and movements in African American history. The museum’s founders – local business owners, volunteers and philanthropists Beverly and Bob Elliott – also plan to offer K-12 programs that will help the next generation understand the contributions African Americans have made to Tucson and beyond. (Read more about the museum on the University of Arizona News page.)

On March 16-17, the University will hold the second annual Diversity and Inclusion Symposium[21], where faculty, staff and students can learn about and discuss important topics related to diversity and inclusion, such as unconscious bias and achieving student success for marginalized communities. This year’s theme is "Rise Together." Proposals for presentations[22] are being accepted through Jan. 31.

Celebrating Black achievements in athletics, past and present

The African American Museum of Southern Arizona will present a fireside chat with Stacey Snowden[15], the daughter of former Arizona men's basketball coach Fred Snowden, on Feb. 3 at 6 p.m. (doors open at 5 p.m.) at the Loft Theater. Snowden, who coached the Wildcats from 1972-82, was one of the first Black basketball coaches in Division I history. The event will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Snowden’s first season with the Wildcats as well as the opening of McKale Memorial Center. Tickets are available through the Loft Cinema[11], at 3233 E. Speedway Blvd.

The Arizona Athletics[16] website will feature a series of videos throughout the month in which several Black student-athletes discuss the importance of Black History Month and ways they celebrate their culture on and off the court. One video, set to be published around Feb. 15, will highlight the experience of two students who took part in a trip to Selma and Montgomery, Alabama – key locations in the civil rights movement – as part of a Pac-12 initiative to provide student-athletes with meaningful educational opportunities in the area of social justice.

There will also be celebrations at men’s and women’s home basketball games throughout the month. Stacey Snowden will be recognized during the men's game against Oregon on Feb. 2, while African American Museum of Southern Arizona founders Bob and Beverly Elliott will be honored during the Feb. 4 game against Oregon State. The women's game on Feb. 17 against Utah will feature a performance by Movement Culture, a Tucson dance studio.

Student-athletes will wear Black History Month T-shirts featuring a University-designed cultural logo[17] made up of symbols of Black community and activism as well as icons representing Black innovations in the arts and sciences ahead of games and in social media posts from Arizona Athletics. Shirts and other products featuring the logo will be available for purchase through the BookStores[18], and the University’s Amazon site[19]. A portion of the sales will go to African American Student Affairs[20] to benefit students.

Read about research and other projects related to Black history and the Black experience in the University of Arizona News[1] and UA@Work[2] stories below.

- The evolution of Black representation on Television[3]
- Chipping away at the iceberg of health disparities[4]
- Doctoral student uses digital, gaming platforms to share Black history[5]
- Understanding Black Grief[6]
- $1M grant to College of Education will help support mental health of Black youth[7]

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Links
[2] https://view.comms.arizona.edu/?p=cf9f695b313971a9cf75321acd38d9c2f810221e2836f3403b3640ccc39121c086d5c76b07f18eb73f03173296d58b2b150b7671d38181818572f3aee03995777c461c8cb3261a90e614c8d768