

## **FESTIVAL CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE**

*Seventh African American Heritage Festival focuses on education and community*

**CHARLOTTE, N.C., Jan. 31, 2024** – Get free admission to the Charlotte Museum of History and celebrate Charlotte’s Black history and culture on Saturday, Feb. 24, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the seventh African American Heritage Festival, hosted by the history museum. This year’s festival also includes a documentary film screening on Thursday night and a Caribbean Carnival event Friday night.

The theme of this year’s festival is education and community, as the museum celebrates the arrival of the [historic Siloam School](#) on its campus in September 2023. Once the building is restored later this year, the Siloam School will become a community resource and a center for history education, including exhibits about the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Black experience. The Siloam School will be the only Rosenwald-designed school in Mecklenburg County devoted to history programming.

“We are proud to host the African American Heritage Festival for the seventh time this year,” said Terri L. White, president & CEO of the Charlotte Museum of History. “Through free performances, guest speakers, panels and community-focused events, the whole family can celebrate and experience the richness of African American heritage and culture in the Charlotte region.”

This year’s festival schedule includes:

### **Thursday, February 22 – Screening of “A Binding Truth” documentary**

6-9 p.m. “A Binding Truth” tells the story of Charlotte football star Jimmie Lee Kirkpatrick, who became the focus of a Civil Rights lawsuit after he was not allowed to play in the 1965 Shrine Bowl All-Star game because he was Black. It’s also the story of how Jimmie Lee connected with Myers Park High School classmate, De Kirkpatrick, and how the two dealt with the revelation that De’s ancestors had enslaved Jimmie’s family. A Q&A session about the history of slavery in Charlotte and at the 1774 Alexander homesite will follow the movie screening.

### **Friday, February 23 - Charlotte Caribbean Carnival**

6–9 p.m. Enjoy Caribbean food and popular music, along with displays of exquisite costumes from Carnival season and historical education about the African Diaspora.

**Saturday, February 24 – African American Heritage Festival**

- 11:30 a.m. HBCU leaders from Howard University, Barber-Scotia College, Elizabeth City State University and others will join a panel discussion.
- 12 p.m. Local artist Jennifer Minnis will create a portrait of Mary Jackson McCrorey, a civic leader in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who was deeply involved in Johnson C. Smith University and the YMCA, among other local organizations. Minnis' art piece is part of the museum's Path of Portraits project, in collaboration with Charlotte is Creative. The project features local artists creating portraits of influential but sometimes overlooked Charlotteans. McCrorey's portrait will become part of the museum's permanent collection, joining eight others in the Path of Portraits.
- 12 p.m. SHAE Movement African Arts will present a 30-minute dance and drum performance honoring the people who were enslaved on the 1774 Alexander Homesite.
- 12:30 p.m. Joe McGill of The Slave Dwelling Project will share a presentation on slavery in an urban setting during the 18th and 19th centuries and the impacts of slavery over the 250-year history of the United States.
- 3:30 p.m. Drums4Life will perform with drums and dancers, inviting audience participation.
- 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Art Vendor Pop-Up will highlight local artists and small businesses, including African Art Speaks, Royal Boss and SISTORIES.

**How to Go**

Saturday's events are free for all ages. Parking on Saturday is available at Garinger High School only. Parking and shuttle service to the museum are free. More information at [charlottemuseum.org/aahf24](http://charlottemuseum.org/aahf24).

Tickets for Thursday's film screening are \$10, and tickets for Friday's Charlotte Caribbean Carnival are \$20, both at [charlottemuseum.org/events](http://charlottemuseum.org/events).

The Charlotte Museum of History exists to save and share the Charlotte region's history, helping create a better understanding of the past and inspiring dialogue about the future. The museum is the steward of the oldest home in Mecklenburg County, the [1774 Hezekiah Alexander Rock House and homesite](#), as well as the [historic Siloam School](#), both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. Visit [charlottemuseum.org](http://charlottemuseum.org) and follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.