HEAR THE STORY OF JUMPING THE BROOM AND JUNETEENTH ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22 AT THE DETROIT HISTORICAL MUSEUM

DETROIT - The Detroit Historical Society’s Black Historic Sites Committee and the Detroit Association of Black Storytellers present “Our Wedding Story: Jumping Through Juneteenth” on Wednesday, June 22 from 6 - 8 p.m. at the Detroit Historical Museum.

Learn about the importance of Juneteenth and why enslaved Africans jumped the broom.

Before the Civil War, jumping the broom was a common practice among enslaved Africans in America’s southern states. Although slave weddings were not legally recognized, they were performed by slave owners who sometimes held the broom themselves. If an owner refused to allow the marriage, the couple jumped the broom in secret. The ritual symbolized sweeping away the old, bringing in the new and celebrating a new beginning. Today, some African Americans incorporate the ritual into their wedding ceremonies in honor of their cultural heritage. “Juneteenth” refers to June 19, 1865, the day Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and that the slaves were finally free.

The program will feature Genevieve Bellamy and Rosie Chapman, both members of the Detroit Association of Black Storytellers. Bellamy will lead a discussion of “Juneteenth.” Chapman, president of the Detroit Association of Black Storytellers, will share the history of jumping the broom. Guests will be invited to participate in a cakewalk and attend the wedding of a 19th century slave couple. In addition, they will enjoy a reception and tour of the Saying I Do: Metro Detroit Weddings exhibit.

The cost of the event is $10 for Detroit Historical Society and Black Historic Sites Committee members and $15 for the public. For more information or to register for the event, please call (313) 833-1262 or visit www.detroithistorical.org.

The Saying I Do exhibit explores the diverse cultural heritage of our area and the community rituals surrounding weddings. On display are portions of the Society’s wedding gown collection and accessories, as well as artifacts and costumes, highlighting ceremonies and traditions of groups throughout the region. More than 20 weddings from a Native American
ceremony in 1640 to a Mexican-American celebration in 2000 are chronicled in the exhibit, which also includes nuptials from the French, Irish, German, Polish, Belgian, Italian, Jewish, Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal (AME), Greek, Russian, Serbian, Lebanese, Syrian, Chaldean, Palestinian, Yemeni, Iraqi, Korean and Hindu traditions.

Comerica Charitable Foundation is the Presenting Sponsor for the Saying I Do exhibit, with Hour Detroit, Metro Detroit Bride and Magic 105.1 FM as Media Sponsors.

The Black Historic Sites Committee of the Detroit Historical Society, founded in 1971, is a group of volunteers that promotes a greater understanding of the contributions of African Americans to the history of metro Detroit and the state of Michigan.

The Detroit Historical Museum, located at 5401 Woodward Ave. (NW corner of Kirby) in Detroit’s Cultural Center area, is open to the public Wednesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from Noon to 5 p.m. On Mondays and Tuesdays, the Museum is not open to the public but available for group tours by calling (313) 833-7979. Adult admission is $6. Seniors (60+), college students with valid college ID, and youth ages 5-18 pay $4. Admission for children ages four and under is free. Parking in the Museum’s lot is $4 at all times. Permanent exhibits include the famous Streets of Old Detroit; Frontiers to Factories; The Motor City; and The Glancy Trains.

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