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MPT presents HBCU Week September 6 - 12

Special program lineup places spotlight on historically Black colleges and universities

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Maryland Public Television (MPT) will celebrate historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) with HBCU Week, a slate of programs and events sharing informative and inspirational stories about HBCUs and the people who attend, graduate, administrate, and advocate for these important institutions of higher learning.

HBCU WEEK

During the week of September 6 - 12, MPT will deliver more than 15 hours of broadcast and livestream content exploring the past, present, and future of the nation's HBCUs. Program highlights include a special one-hour episode of *Direct Connection* featuring interviews with HBCU presidents, an evening of music featuring HBCU student performers, and documentaries featuring students and staff. A preview is available at <https://youtu.be/RycROT1Pniq>.

This is the second year MPT is presenting HBCU Week. Viewers can find more information and view trailers for the upcoming programs at mpt.org/hbcu. During HBCU Week, audiences are encouraged to contribute to the conversation on social media using the hashtag **#HBCUWeekMD**.

Beyond broadcast, MPT is offering two interactive events. On Wednesday, September 8 at 7 p.m., the network is partnering with HBCUDigest.com to present "Awakening: HBCU Reckoning and Revival." Panelists and participants will discuss HBCUs as an important, vibrant, and active part of the Black American experience in politics, economics, culture, and industry. The event will take place on MPT's [OVEE virtual screening platform](#), [Facebook](#) page, [YouTube](#) page, and the [HBCU Sirius XM Channel](#). Then on Sunday, September 12 at 3 p.m., MPT and Bowie State University (BSU) will co-host a preview of the new PBS documentary *Muhammad Ali*. Attendees will see a portion of the film and hear from BSU panelists. Register at <https://ovee.itvs.org/screenings/mdxi5>.

HBCU Week is part of the statewide public TV network's Standing Against Racism: Fostering Unity Through Dialogue initiative. MPT began this long-term initiative in 2020 to stimulate thoughtful discussion and increase understanding of race-related issues in communities across Maryland. More information and resources are available at mpt.org/racism.

"HBCUs in our region and beyond are responsible for training, developing, and preparing leaders who contribute to every sector of industry," explains Travis E. Mitchell, MPT senior vice president/chief content officer and a Morgan State University graduate. "HBCU Week on MPT is our opportunity to tell the stories of these truly inspirational, important, and uniquely American institutions."

In Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress officially defined an HBCU as a school of higher learning that was accredited and established before 1964, and whose principal mission is the education of African Americans. There are 101 HBCUs, including six in MPT's viewing area. Those six are [Bowie State University](#) (BSU), [Coppin State University](#) (CSU), [Howard University](#) (HU), [Morgan State University](#) (MSU), [University of the District of Columbia](#) (UDC), and [University of Maryland Eastern Shore](#) (UMES).

MPT-HD's HBCU Week 2021 program lineup

Monday, September 6

Direct Connection: One-Hour HBCU Special – 7-8 p.m.

MPT's Jeff Salkin and WEAA-FM's Dr. Karsonya "Kaye" Whitehead co-host a one-hour special that takes an in-depth look at the current state of HBCUs. [WEAA-FM](#) will simulcast the program.

Interviews with the region's six HBCU presidents feature their innovative new programs, reveal their plans for the future, and discuss the national implications of Maryland's recent \$577 million settlement related to the state's history of discrimination against its four HBCUs. Interviews include Dr. Harry Williams, president, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, as well as HBCU presidents Dr. Aminta Breaux, BSU; Dr. Anthony Jenkins, CSU; Dr. Wayne A. I. Frederick, HU; Dr. David Wilson, MSU; Ronald Mason, Jr., J.D., UDC; and Dr. Heidi M. Anderson, UMES.

The program then looks at the arrival of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Basketball Tournament in Baltimore. The CIAA is one of the nation's oldest athletic conferences and is comprised of mostly HBCUs, including 2022 tournament host Bowie State University. The CIAA's postseason tournament is among the country's most financially successful, producing upwards of 150,000 visitors and driving \$50 million of economic activity to host cities. Al Hutchinson, president & CEO, Visit Baltimore; Shelonda Stokes, president, Downtown Partnership; Jacqie McWilliams, commissioner, CIAA; and Dr. Aminta Breaux, president, BSU, discuss their hopes, plans, and preparations for the tournament.

Shaw Rising – 8-9 p.m.

Shaw Rising tells the tumultuous and inspiring story of [Shaw University](#), the oldest HBCU in the South and among the oldest in the nation. The film documents the history of Shaw University, from its founding in 1865 to its growth during Reconstruction and challenges it faced in the Jim Crow system and modern Civil Rights movement, as well as its resurrection under the leadership of former Morgan State University Dean Dr. Talbert O. Shaw and its fight to remain relevant today.

Freedom Riders – 9-11 p.m.

This *American Experience* documentary illustrates the powerful, harrowing, and ultimately inspirational story of six months in 1961 that changed America forever. From May until November 1961, more than 400 Black and white Americans risked their lives for simply traveling together on buses and trains as they journeyed through the Deep South.

Tuesday, September 7

The Morgan Lacrosse Story – 8-9 p.m.

Set against the racially turbulent 1970s, *The Morgan Lacrosse Story* shares the experiences of the nation's first college lacrosse team at an HBCU, the MSU Bears men's lacrosse team. The film chronicles the accomplishment of an extraordinary group of young Black men and their fearless leader who took the field in a predominantly white sport.

Thursday, September 9 – An evening of music

MPT's Tony Hill and Donald Thoms co-host more than three hours of musical talent including Howard University's Afro Blue jazz ensemble, the Morgan State University Choir, and the Fisk Jubilee Singers a cappella group. During interludes throughout the evening, the co-hosts interview directors, members, and supporters of HBCU choirs to gain further insight into their experiences and perspectives.

Afro Blue: A Year in the Life – 8-8:30 p.m.

Afro Blue, Howard University's premier vocal jazz ensemble, invites audiences to take a behind-the-scenes look into what it's like to be a member of the dynamic group. Viewers join the artists on their 2018-2019 musical journey, from auditions to rehearsals, performances, and recording sessions.

The Morgan Choir: A Joyful Celebration – 8:30-10:30 p.m.

This concert special features one of the nation's most prestigious university choral ensembles and salutes Dr. Nathan Carter, who led the choir for 34 years. Filmed at the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore, the performance features a diverse repertoire ranging from classical to gospel.

Jubilee Singers: Sacrifice and Glory – 10:30-11:30 p.m.

This *American Experience* documentary tells the story of a group of former slaves who were among the first to be educated at Fisk University, an HBCU in Tennessee. The group battled prejudice and oppression while using their talents to raise money and awareness for their institution, eventually performing for presidents and queens, touring the United States and Europe, and bringing to the fore now-famous songs such as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "This Little Light of Mine."

Friday, September 10

State Circle – 7-7:30 p.m.

MPT's *State Circle* reporters interview Maryland officials who are HBCU graduates about their experiences at the institutions and how those experiences informed their career development. Among guests scheduled to appear is Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, who will talk about his experiences at Howard University, and what the settlement of the long-running lawsuit with HBCU's will mean for the state.

Saturday, September 11

Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities – 12:30-2:30 p.m.

This *Independent Lens* documentary from award-winning filmmakers Stanley Nelson and Marco Williams explores the pivotal role historically Black colleges and universities have played over the course of 150 years. Themes carried throughout the film will provide the basis for discussion with HBCU leaders, alumni, and current students during breaks throughout the broadcast.

Afro Blue: A Year in the Life – 2:30-3 p.m. (see description offered as part of Thursday's lineup)

The Morgan Choir: A Joyful Celebration – 3-5 p.m. (see description offered as part of Thursday's lineup)

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.