

12th Annual Austin African American Book Festival

For its 12th year, Austin's African American Book Festival (AABF) honors classic African American titles, uplifting novels of present-day, and works that imagine a masterful future. The festival will be held Saturday, June 23 from 9:30-5:00 pm at the Carver Museum and Library, 1165 Angelina St. in East Austin. This community event is free and open to the public.

This year's keynote speaker is publisher Paul Coates, who started Black Classics Press 40 years ago to ensure that black literature is available for future generations. Coates formerly served as the African American Studies reference and acquisition librarian at Howard University and is the father of cultural critic Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Writers Victoria Christopher Murray and John Jennings will read and sign their latest works. Murray won the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work for her social commentary novel, *Stand Your Ground*. In addition to being a graphic novelist, Jennings is a professor of media and cultural studies.

Evan Narcisse, author of the *Rise of the Black Panther*, and festival veterans Dr. Mark Cunningham and Dr. Peniel Joseph, present literary discussions inspired by the Black Panther phenomenon.

Brooke Obie, an award-winning author of the debut novel *Book of Addis: Cradled Embers and Dext Peay*, author of the science fiction series *The Fire and Ice Chronicles* will also read and sign their works.

Younger readers will enjoy Lori Aurelia Williams, who has written four young adult novels and was a Michener Fellow at UT Austin. Illustrator Don Tate will read from his latest work and lead youthful attendees in an art activity.

As has become a tradition, attendees have a chance to discover literary talent at the new author showcase, which kicks off the festival at 9:30.

For more information visit www.aabookfest.com

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New Study Finds Disparities Among College Graduates



By AFRO Staff

Remembering the Juneteenth Traditions of Emancipation Park

by Aricquel Payne / Special to The VILLAGER

Emancipation Park was arguably the most significant public space for African Americans during the late 19th century. Thomas J. White, a former slave, founded the park as a place for black people to gather on Juneteenth, the day that black people in Texas were first given their freedom from slavery in 1865. Unlike other states, Texas plantation owners refused to follow the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln. The park was founded on a five-acre area near what is now Rosewood Avenue and Chicon Street and was owned by black residents of the neighborhood. People that had previously been owned by white

A new study investigates inequity beyond college doors, showing that even Black and Hispanic students who earn tertiary degrees face disparities.

The report, *The Neglected College Race Gap: Racial Disparities Among College Completers*, which was authored by the Center for American Progress, went beyond the usual examination of education disparities in graduation rates and college access rates. And, in focusing on college graduates, the report found what it called "serious inequities" in ar-

eas such as the type of degrees and quality of education.

Among the major findings:

- Compared with White students, Black and Hispanic graduates are far more likely to have attended for-profit colleges and less likely to have attended four-year public or nonprofit institutions.

- Black and Hispanic graduates are more likely to attend institutions that have less money to spend on quality education.

- Black and Hispanic students are less likely to hold degrees in critical

fields such as engineering and education, mathematics and statistics, and the physical sciences.

Recommendations from the report include investigating means by which students of color may be discouraged from pursuing certain degrees, such as by higher tuition pricing and poor or biased student advisement.

The authors concluded by saying, "Finding a path to equity in the types of credentials students get is not only a moral imperative for this country but is also crucial to its future success."



Photo Credit: Grace Murray Stephenson, Austin History Center

slavers were now able to own the land that they celebrated their freedom on.

Every year, Juneteenth reminded the black community of its growth and resilience in the face of extreme oppression. Juneteenth cel-

ebrations included music, dancing, parades, and picnics. Thirty years after the purchase of Emancipation Park, the City of Austin seized the land through eminent domain and built a segregated public housing project on the land.

This seizure was one of many instances in the coming years that would displace the black population in Austin, such as the 1928 Master Plan, and reflects the displacement that has occurred more recently through the gentrification of East Austin. Today, the Rosewood Courts housing project sits on the land that was once Emancipation Park.

Emancipation Park represented the triumphant spirit that helped Black people in Texas persevere throughout slavery and thereafter. The celebration of Juneteenth in the African American community today continues the traditions established by Black people through centuries of hardship.



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