

News Release

Jan. 31, 2007

Northern Illinois University and DeKalb Schools Celebrate Black History Month

Northern Illinois University and DeKalb School District #428 will present a Black History Month extravaganza on Tuesday, Feb. 27 from 6:00-8:30 p.m. in the Duke Ellington Ballroom in the Holmes Student Center. The event, “The Village Comes Together to Celebrate Our Collective History from an African-American Perspective: From Whence We Came,” will begin with a poster display by NIU students. At 7:00 p.m., student representatives from each District 428 school will be featured in a presentation or performance about an important figure in African-American history.

Students from DeKalb High School will perform works of composer and orchestra leader Duke Ellington while the middle schools will showcase authors – Clinton Rosette Middle School will feature Maya Angelo and Huntley Middle School will showcase Langston Hughes. The elementary schools will cover a range of prominent African-Americans and others, both living and historical: Brooks, poet Gwendolyn Brooks; Chesebro, educator Marva Collins and journalist and civil rights leader Ida B. Wells; Cortland, civil rights leader W.E.B. Dubois and Marcus Garvey, organizer of the Universal Negro Improvement Association; Jefferson, educator Booker T. Washington; Lincoln, Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White; Littlejohn will feature a performance by the Littlejohn Harambee Drum Club; Malta, Ruby Bridges, the first black student in an all-white New Orleans school; Tyler, singer Ella Fitzgerald; and Wright, historian and author Carter G. Woodson and railroad Pullman porters.

NIU’s Operation Book Bag is helping the schools with research as needed. Sororities, fraternities, student-recognized organizations, and the Center for Black Studies are supporting Operation Book Bag by providing manpower help with the presentations. Operation Book Bag is a community service initiative created to assist underrepresented families in the DeKalb School District. The college students who support this effort gain leadership skills. The group was founded by LaMetra Curry and implemented by the NIU Black Graduate Student association in February 2005.

The public is invited to attend the event on Feb. 27. The Holmes Student Center is located on the Northern Illinois University campus on Lucinda Avenue between Normal Road and Carroll Avenue.