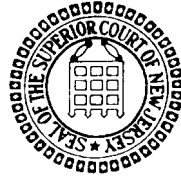


SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY

CHAMBERS OF
LAWRENCE M. LAWSON
ASSIGNMENT JUDGE



MONMOUTH COUNTY COURT HOUSE
71 MONUMENT PARK
FREEHOLD, NEW JERSEY 07728-1266
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For immediate release: Feb. 19, 2014

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Monmouth Vicinage Celebrates a Century of Black Life, History and Culture

The Monmouth Vicinage will hold a Black History Month program on Friday, Feb. 21 from noon to 2 p.m. in the jury assembly room of the Monmouth County Courthouse, 71 Monument Park, Freehold. The presentation, "A Century of Black Life, History and Culture," will include a tribute to the life of anti-apartheid leader and former South African president Nelson Mandela.

The program will open with a presentation of the colors by the Neptune High School Navy Junior ROTC Cadets, led by retired Cmdr. Tommy Atkins, senior naval science instructor. Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson and Trial Court Administrator Andrew M. Graubard will give opening remarks.

A dramatization of the life of Nelson Mandela will be given by attorney Joseph M. Champagne Jr., mayor of South Toms River and a member of the Monmouth Vicinage Committee on Minority Concerns. Emmanuel Leveille and Izhané Wilson of the Neptune branch of the New Jersey Orators will present. Acclaimed playwright and Monmouth County native Kenneth G. Craddox of Bishop's Kid Productions will direct a theatrical performance of "Do You Dream?" about the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with actors Talib Mohammed, Christina Clemonts, Shanda Berry, Chanelle Dunn and Stephanie Miller.

Vocal performances include the African-American national anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," by Neptune High School student Jordan Vinson and songs by Talib Mohammed, Ashley Graham, and vicinage employee Tarika Jean Pierre. Kiara Joyner, a freshman at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia will perform contemporary dance. The Neptune High School Jazz Band will perform, led by William Haughwout, director of bands.

Local artist Kortez will create a piece of original artwork during the program, and some of his other works will be on display. Cultural and pictorial exhibits and a timeline of significant events in African-American history also will be displayed.

Judge Lawson will present recognition awards to winners of the Monmouth Vicinage Black History Month art and essay contest. Approximately 100 students from throughout Monmouth County are expected to attend.

Judge Thomas F. Scully, chairperson of the Monmouth Vicinage EEO/AA Advisory Committee and Judge Honora O'Brien Kilgallen, chairperson of the minority concerns advisory committee, expressed their appreciation for the volunteer efforts of the performers, artists, employees and Monmouth Bar Association in making this program possible. They stressed the importance of strengthening bonds with the community in collective recognition of the contributions of African Americans.

Sponsored by the EEO/AA and minority concerns advisory committees, the program is free and open to the public.

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