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Juneteenth: A celebration of freedom — and a continued dream

June 16, 2021



Juneteenth, a commemoration of the end of slavery in the U.S., is a day to celebrate freedom — and a time to dream, says one Georgia Southern University professor.

On June 19, 1865, Union Gen. Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to announce that the Civil War had ended and enslaved Black Americans were free by executive decree.

More than 155 years later, the annual remembrance still resonates, explained Maxine Bryant, Ph.D., assistant professor of criminal justice and director of Georgia Southern's Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Center. It's vitally important not to forget

history, she said, however the day represents more than past triumphs.

“We want to honor the dream,” said Bryant. “When we think about freedom, we have to recognize that enslaved Blacks dreamt of freedom and they didn’t see it for themselves, but they dreamt of it for generations to come. And then generations later when we’re dealing with the civil rights issues, those people dreamt of freedom. They dreamt it for the generation that lives now. So as we celebrate Juneteenth it is not just a recognition or celebration of when the people in Galveston, Texas, found out about freedom. It’s about all that freedom represents.”

Across the country, organized efforts, like the one on Georgia Southern’s Armstrong Campus, which will feature Gullah Geechee master storytellers and drummers, an African dance troupe, and traditional quilt lessons, are some of the many ways communities will celebrate Juneteenth on Saturday, June 19.

“Recognizing and celebrating Juneteenth in the communities we serve is an honor and privilege and in direct alignment with our institutional value of Inclusive Excellence,” said TaJuan R. Wilson, Ed.D., associate vice president of Inclusive Excellence and chief diversity officer. “It is my hope that campus education and programming will continue to expand in the years to come and that every member of our learning community understands and celebrates the historical significance of that day in 1865, while making connections to our ongoing, comprehensive work in diversity, equity and inclusion.”

Juneteenth Live on the Armstrong Campus is free and open to the public.

The event will take place at the following:

Saturday, June 19

3:30-5:30 p.m.

International Gardens (between Solms Hall and Hawes Hall)

- Hear the drum, the song, the stories told by the Saltwata Players
- Listen to poems of freedom
- Learn the powers of the quilt
- Taste the flavors of Gullah Geechee cuisine
- See the movements of the Sankofa African Dance Troupe
- Experience the African spirit

**Sponsored by The Center for Africana Studies and The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Center*

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