

# Time To Recognize Contributions Of Black Americans

The month fast approaching is annually set aside as a time to recognize the contributions and achievements of Black Americans who helped to make this country the nation she is.

Throughout February and using this column as a vehicle, I'd like to emphasize some of those contributions, whether it's through some special programs being held or whether it's through the mentioning of some black American who had a hand in paving the way and opening doors for posterity.

Before there was Bessie Smith, B.B. King, or Billie Holiday, black people sang the blues. According to Tom Hanchett at public radio station WFAE, most of the old time blues that he enjoyed most he pleasantly discovered came from the Piedmont region.

During February in tribute to Black History Month, Hanchett will rebroadcast "The Piedmont Blues" the station's series of programs on the rich blues heritage of this region. The updated and expanded program will air each Saturday, beginning February 1, 11 p.m.

If listeners think that what they will hear will be blues from Mississippi or Chicago, think again. Hanchett says, "Blues is



WITH LORETTA MANAGO



Loretta

the folk music of black America. Wherever black people have lived in this country, they have created their own, unique, regional brands of the blues."

"The Piedmont Blues" will highlight the contributions of musicians from the Carolinas, Georgia, and Virginia including noted singers like Elizabeth Cotten, Josh White, and Sonny Terry, and the less familiar, the amateurs who keep the tradition alive today.

**THEATRE FESTIVAL**  
From the blues let's move to theatre. During February, 11-15 the American College Theatre Festival's Southeast Regional Competition will be held at Catawba College in Salisbury. So what's that got to do with Black History Month? Just this: three of the plays that will be put on are about black life. The first of the three

plays is a new play by Carolyn Coles titled, "Mournin'". This three-act tragi-comedy focuses on the death of the family matriarch, Grandma Cora. The play depicts the struggles of two sisters who overcome embittered childhood memories on their journey to reunification.

"Home," the second play written by North Carolinian playwright Sam-Art Williams, traces the adventures of Cephus Miller, an orphan from the farm to college, through Vietnam War, conflicts of conscience, big city life, unemployment, despair, and return to the land.

Written by South African playwright Athol Fugard, "Master Harold and the Boys," set in the 50s in Port Elizabeth, focuses on the fragility of the love and friendship that exist between the characters. Ad-

mission for each production is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students and senior citizens. For dates and times, call 704-637-4393.

**WSOC CHANGES FACES**  
Friday nights on Channel 9 have taken on a different color between the hours of 8 and 10 p.m. With a change in format, Friday night's lineup has four

black sitcoms. Of course, we've all become accustomed to "Webster" and "Diff'rent Strokes." But what is new is the resurrected "What's Happening Now" series and "He's The Mayor" featuring Kelvin Hooks.

I can't remember when there has been black comedy back-to-back for two solid hours. How long will it last? As long as the ratings are good. Will it break the stronghold that "The Twilight Zone" and "Dallas" have? That, my friends, remains to be seen.

**OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS**  
The Inspirational Mass Choir of Cheraw, S.C., will be in concert as the featured guests of "Opportunity Knocks," Sunday, February 2. The religious

brand show airs on Channel 42 at 5:30 p.m.

**GROWING UP POOR**  
Poverty, in any form, is ugly and reprehensible. Go with "Frontline" Thursday, February 4, at 9 p.m., as they visit Chester, PA. Focusing on the children there, "Frontline" discovers an awful reality—half of them are plagued by poor health, malnutrition, drugs, and family problems.

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