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UDC CELEBRATES EMANCIPATION DAY AND EXAMINES SYMBOLISM OF DC HOME RULE

Washington, DC – The University of the District of Columbia marks the forty-first anniversary of the District’s Home Rule and celebrates the historic signing of the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act with a special program on Thursday, April 3rd at 10:00 a.m. on the Van Ness campus, Building 41, room A03.

The DC Compensated Emancipation Act of 1862 ended slavery in Washington, D.C., freed 3,100 individuals and reimbursed those who had legally owned them. Moreover, this historic legislation offered the newly freed men and women money to emigrate and start their lives anew.

According to event organizer, Dr. Virginia Howard, this special program will feature historic spoken words and song to highlight the African-American experience in overcoming the legacy of slavery after the approval of the Compensated Emancipation Act. She says it is the courage and struggle of those who fought to make this legislation a reality that is celebrated each year.

“Emancipation Day on April 16 holds a special place in the hearts of the District’s black residents,” says the longtime education professor. “On the first anniversary of emancipation after the Civil War ended, the city’s African-American community organized a huge parade and has marked the occasion ever since. As the District’s only public university, which began as a “school for colored girls,” it’s only fitting that we pause to recognize the historic significance of this landmark legislation,” she says.

In addition to civil rights-era songs and recitations of historic speeches by Frederick Douglass and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the program also includes a brief panel discussion about the symbiotic relationship between the early struggle for emancipation and the District’s ongoing efforts for legitimate home rule, congressional representation, and statehood. The panel discussion will be moderated by Education Department Chairman, Dr. Thomas Bullock.

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