

# SPRING CONVOCATION

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE ARTS



**FEBRUARY 14, 2024, AT 10 A.M.**

MARTIN LUTHER KING COMMUNICATION ARTS  
CENTER, MYERS AUDITORIUM



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## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

# Ytasha L. Womack

Author, Filmmaker, Dancer



**Ytasha L. Womack is a multifaceted creative professional known for her work as an award-winning author, filmmaker, independent scholar, and dance therapist.** She is a prominent figure in Afrofuturism, delivering lectures worldwide on the power of imagination and its diverse applications. Her book "Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture" is considered a definitive guide on the subject, widely used in academic settings. Womack's influence extends beyond academia; her expertise has inspired real-world manifestations such as the Afrofuturism-themed restaurant Bronze in Washington D.C. She has been featured in prestigious institutions like the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture and contributed to documentaries exploring Afrofuturism's origins.

As a curator and resident artist, Womack has spearheaded significant cultural events and collaborations, including Carnegie Hall's Afrofuturism Festival and Black Rock Senegal, led by renowned artist Kehinde Wiley. Her creative ventures include writing projects like "Black Panther: A Cultural Exploration" and the upcoming graphic novel "Blak Kube," as well as producing Afrofuturist-themed science animations. Womack's contributions have earned her recognition as a thought leader and innovator in design, with numerous accolades and features in prominent publications. With a Chicago-native background and a slate of upcoming releases, Womack continues to push boundaries and shape the landscape of Afrofuturism and creative expression.

## UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

# Dr. Aminta H. Breaux

President, Bowie State University

**Dr. Aminta H. Breaux has served as the visionary 10th president of Bowie State University since July 2017, bringing more than 30 years of diverse higher education leadership experience to the position.** As president, she is committed to ensuring that every student at Bowie State University develops an entrepreneurial mindset to achieve success in the rapidly changing workplace and communities. Dr. Breaux initiated a university-wide focus to infuse entrepreneurship education across the disciplines and has led the effort to build an Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community, slated to open in fall 2021. She is dedicated to building on the legacy and rich history of Maryland's oldest historically Black university with a strategic focus on ensuring the long-term viability of the institution.

Dr. Breaux is a leading voice in 21st century education, and because of her extensive knowledge and expertise, she has been tapped to serve in multiple leadership roles. She was appointed to the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Governor's P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland. She is chair for the Board of Directors for the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA).

Dr. Breaux is committed to serving her community, particularly with programs and support activities that enrich the lives of children and youth. She is a member of the board of directors for the Greater Prince George's Business Roundtable, Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce and the University of Maryland Capital Region Health. Previously, she was on the board of directors for Leadership Lancaster, Philadelphia Insurance Companies, SCORE of Lancaster-Lebanon, the Lancaster City Alliance, the American Cities Foundation, Philadelphia Academies, and Dancing Classrooms Philly. She also served on the resource board for the United Way and on the mission and community benefit committee of Lancaster General Health. She is an emeritus trustee of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia after serving there for 16 years. She is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Strada Education Network.

Her recent honors include the Educator of the Year Award from the National Council of Negro Women. She also received the Trailblazer Award from the Bowie Business Innovation Center (BIC), the business accelerator located at Bowie State, in conjunction with Capital One, and the Capital City Chapter Links Inc. Leadership Award.

She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Temple University, a master's degree in psychological services in education from the University of Pennsylvania, and a doctorate in counseling psychology from Temple University. She is also a graduate of the Harvard Institute for Executive Management and the American Association for State Colleges and Universities Millennium Leadership Institute.

Dr. Breaux and her husband, Melvin—a former partner of Drinker Biddle & Reat—have three daughters and four grandchildren.



SPRING CONVOCATION 2024

# Order of Service

Presiding.....Khaleah M. Brinson  
History and Government Major

Opening Music .....DJ Underdog, @underdogthedj

Prelude..... University Bands  
Billy R. Bennett  
Director of University Bands

## Academic Processional

Posting of Colors.....BSU Army ROTC  
Lt. Col. Kareem Fernandez  
Commander

*The Star Spangled Banner*..... Arranged by Mark Hayes  
By Francis Scott Key

*Lift Every Voice and Sing*..... Bowie State University Concert Choir  
By James Weldon Johnson Arranged by Brandon Felder, Choir Director

Moment of Centering .....Janaya Jenkins  
Vice President Campus Activities Board

Reflections of Carter G. Woodson ..... Miles Griswold  
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.

Spoken Word: Original Work - "Sweet Land of Liberty" .....Featuring:  
Bernice Ramey  
Senior in Communications and Broadcast Journalism

Occasion..... Dr. David L. Reed  
Assistant Professor, Department of History & Government

Official Opening of the Academic Year .....Dr. Guy-Alain Amoussou  
Acting Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Bowie State University

Welcome .....Kairiq Jones  
Vice President, Student Government Association  
  
Ephonia Marie Green  
President, Graduate Student Association

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SPRING CONVOCATION 2024

**Order of Service, cont.**

Opening Remarks ..... Dr. Aminta H. Breaux  
President, Bowie State University

Dance Performance ..... *The Future is Black* by the Collective  
Dr. Truly A. Davis, Choreographer

Monologue..... Caleb Shaw - Watson  
Mister Bowie State University

Introduction of Speaker ..... Tewodross Melchishua Williams  
Chair/Associate Professor, Department of Fine and Performing Arts

Music & Spoken Word Selection ..... *Wade in the Water*  
(Spiritual arr. J Garr, M. Morrison, N. D. Dankwah-Coffie)

**Keynote Address**

Ytasha Womack..... Arthur, "Afrofuturism:  
The World of Black Sci-Fi & Fantasy Culture"

An Afrofuturistic Medley ..... Arranged by Assistant Director of University Bands  
Michael Simmons

Closing..... Nianna Perkins, SGA, President

Retiring Of Colors ..... BSU Army ROTC, Lt. Col. Kareem Fernandez,  
Commander

The Alma Mater ..... Led by the Bowie State University Concert Choir

**Academic Recessional**

Postlude..... University Bands  
Director Billy R. Bennett

## African Americans and the Arts



**African American art infuses African, Caribbean and Black American lived experiences to create a resounding connection to culture.** The African American influence has been paramount in visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, culinary and other forms of artistic expression.

Cultural movements like the New Negro, Black Arts, Black Renaissance, hip-hop, and Afrofuturism have set the standards for popular trends around the world. African American artists have used art to preserve history, promote empowerment and connect with each other. It is 2024, and today we examine the varied history and life of African American arts and artisans.

## MUSICAL SELECTIONS

### ***Lift Every Voice and Sing***

By James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun  
Let us march on till victory is won.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

### ***Alma Mater***

By Charlotte B. Robinson

There's a spot in my heart that never goes cold.  
There's a place in my memory that never grows old.  
There's a prayer on my lips that I'll ever be true  
To God and my country,  
To Bowie State, my school.

REFRAIN

Oh, Bowie State, dear Bowie State  
May you forever be the flame of faith,  
The torch of truth,  
To guide the steps of youth.

There's a song in my heart that I'll ever sing  
Of the beauties of Bowie State that each season brings.  
There's a pledge in my heart that I'll ever keep true  
To uphold the standards of Bowie State, my school.

REFRAIN



## 2024 BLACK HISTORY MONTH COMMITTEE

### **Chairs**

Dr. William B. Lewis

Dr. William S. Allen

Frances Ampah	Lt. Col. Kareem Fernandez	Linda Orajekwa
Khaleah M Brinson	Ephonia Marie Green	Lisandra Rodriguezcole
Dr. Tyesha Nicole Burks	Wanda Rene Howard	Michele F. Richardson
Dr. Shirelle Briscoe	Margo Buck-Hurley	Cassandra Robinson
Thomasina Boardley	George Jones	Barbara Smith
Yvette Caldwell	Chante Ingram	Patricia M. Taylor
Alexus Clanton	Erica Johnson	David Lee Thompson
Dr. Sean Coleman	Micheal Lamont Mcgee	Dr. Otis Williams
Carver Rashad Campbell	Tewodross M. Williams	Jennifer Williams
Dr. Talisha Dunn-Square	Vonzella McQueen	Annette Wedderburn
Teresa Ann Ferrante	Dr. Otis Thomas	LaTonya Wrenn
Dr. Brandon Jamal Felder	Dr. Keadrick Peters	

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Black History Month committee at Bowie State University, in conjunction with the Department of History and Government, extends heartfelt appreciation to the Department of Fine and Performing Arts and to the students, faculty, and staff who have contributed to the planning and execution of this program. We are grateful for the invaluable support and assistance provided by the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Military Science/Reserve Officer Training Corps, the Department of Communications, the Department of Auxiliary Services, the Office of Conference and Event Services, the University Bookstore, the Office of University Relations & Marketing, Margo Buck-Hurley, and the Staff Council and Faculty Senate. Their contributions have been critical to our success.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH HIGHLIGHT

### **Dionne Warwick**



**Dionne Warwick was born in East Orange, New Jersey, on December 12, 1940.** Her father Mantrel, promoted gospel records while her mother, Lee, managed the Drinkard Singers. At the age of fourteen, Warwick, along with her sister and cousin, formed The Gospelairens. They received widespread recognition by winning an amateur contest at the famed Apollo Theater.

In 1959, Warwick received a music scholarship to the University of Hartford in Connecticut. Warwick signed a recording contract in 1962 and her first single, "Don't Make Me Over," was a hit, attracting both R&B and pop audiences. From 1963 to 1966, Warwick achieved unprecedented success by becoming the first crossover artist to have a dozen consecutive Top 100 hits. In 1968, Warwick became the first African American solo female artist to receive a Grammy for "Do You Know the Way to San Jose." By 1970, she had recorded thirty hit singles, close to twenty best-selling albums and received a second Grammy for the album "I'll Never Fall in Love Again."

Warwick brought her dynamic singing talents and commanding personality to television outlets, as well. She hosted the successful music programs Solid Gold, the Soul Train Music Awards and starred in her own show, Dionne and Friends. A tireless activist, Warwick has served as the U.S. ambassador of health, a post that she held through both the Ronald Reagan and George Bush administrations. As one of the first artists to heighten public awareness of the AIDS epidemic, Warwick's concerted efforts raised millions of dollars.

She completed an international tour with Bacharach, performed with The National Opera Company of Japan, and recorded the critically acclaimed album Aquarela Do Brazil (Watercolors of Brazil). Additionally, she runs her own television production and interior design companies.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH FEATURED EVENTS

# [bowiestate.edu/blackhistorymonth](http://bowiestate.edu/blackhistorymonth)

### **Seeing Ourselves in Black History: A Youth Art Contest for 4th-6th Graders**

February 3 - February 15, 2024, Front Lobby of Proctor Building

This exciting opportunity invites 4th - 6th graders to celebrate Black History Month through an art contest hosted at Bowie State University. Participants will engage in culture through art, history, and children's literature. Bowie State students in the Elementary Education Program will judge the entries and share their insights on seeing ourselves within children's literature.

### **URBANANZ Presents Ripple Effect: New Performances Inspired by African Americans in the Arts**

February 14, 2024, 7:30 p.m., The Dionne Warwick Theater

An evening of student-written and performed monologues, scenes, and spoken word pieces inspired by the works of great African Americans in the Arts. Artists often draw inspiration from other artists, much like the name and inspiration for Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" was named for and inspired by the questions voiced by Langston Hughes in his poem "Harlem." The work of African American artists from the near and distant past are like pebbles tossed into a pond, sending out ripples that continue to spread into ever-widening circles as they touch and inspire those around them and the artists of the future.

### **Balliol Slavery Project Film Screening**

February 15, 2024, 11a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Student Center Theater

The Bowie State University W.E.B. Du Bois Center presents a screening of the film "Slavery in the Age of Revolution" developed by Oxford University's Balliol College. The film narrates the story of the transatlantic slave trade through interviews with the Balliol Slavery Project exhibition's curators alongside some of the exhibits. It also includes interviews with the Master and a member of Balliol's Black and Minority Ethnic Society about what the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade and the racial injustices associated with it mean today.

### **Conversation with Honorary Consul Oliver St. Clair Franklin and Dr. Monifa Love**

February 20, 2024, 11a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Student Center Ballroom B & C

The W.E.B. Du Bois Center at Bowie State University presents a Black History Month Conversation with Honorary British Consul Oliver St. Clair Franklin on his life and career with inspiring lessons for today's generation.

### **Safe Space Training Black History Ed**

February 20, 2024, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Thurgood Marshall Library, LGBTQIA Resource Center, RM 1115

Please join the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services and the LGBTQIA Resource Center for an intentional safe space training during Black History Month. The Black History Month Safe Space training will highlight how race, shame, and mental health impact Black Americans within the LGBT+ community. Safe Space training is an opportunity to learn about LGBT+ identities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and related communities), gender, and sexuality and examine prejudice, assumptions, privilege, and intersectionality theory.

### **Desmond Dunham - Running Against the Odds Book Event**

February 21, 2024, 5:00 p.m., JEP 102

"Running Against the Odds" is a narrative that chronicles Desmond Dunham's journey of personal growth and success as he triumphed over various challenges on and off the racetrack.

### **Our Heritage 'A Tribute to Black Music Composers'**

February 26, 2024, 7- 8:30 p.m., Fine & Performing Arts Center, Recital Hall

Join the Bowie State University Concert Choir and Prince George's County Choral Society as we celebrate Black History Month with a free music concert to honor significant African American composers throughout history. See you there! Monday February 26th at 7pm in the BSU Fine and Performing Arts Center Recital Hall. See you there!

These events are subject to change. Visit the Black History Month web calendar for current information: [bowiestate.edu/blackhistorymonth](http://bowiestate.edu/blackhistorymonth).



14000 Jericho Park Road  
Bowie, Maryland 20715  
301-860-4000

**[bowiestate.edu](http://bowiestate.edu)**