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Photos available upon request

Oh, Freedom!

A Black History Month Commemoration in Narrative and Song

Dramatist, researcher, and educator **Wesley G. Williams, II** teams with musician and vocalist **H. LeArthur (H.L.) Wright, II** to present a tribute to the powerful connection between the Negro Spiritual and the Underground Railroad in a special Black History Month program hosted by the Oberlin Heritage Center on Saturday, February 11 at 7 p.m. at The First Church in Oberlin, United Church of Christ (106 North Main Street, Oberlin). ***Oh, Freedom! Commemorating the Negro Spiritual and the Underground Railroad*** recalls in five compelling movements the struggle and striving of individuals, families, and our nation during the tumultuous years of the mid-19th century. Carefully selected prose narratives from historical scholars, poems from specific time periods and spirituals that align with the text offer an opportunity to commemorate the fusion of spoken word and resounding song to describe the evil, ugliness, and authentic beauty of this significant time in our country's history.

Mr. Williams received his B.A. at the W.E.B. Dubois Honor's College at Jackson State University and his M.A. at the University of Mississippi. Before his relocation to the Washington, DC area, Williams was a part-time graduate student at The Ohio State University pursuing his doctorate in Multicultural and Equity Studies in Education. He presently works as Senior Project Director in the Education Studies division of Westat, a social-science research firm. He is the founder of Eneq Works (www.enegworks.com) through which he combines his passions for history and music in a number of different historical dramatic productions. Local residents may recall seeing Williams present an outstanding program about abolitionist and orator Frederick Douglass a little over a year ago when he appeared in Heiser Auditorium at Kendal at Oberlin.

Mr. Wright is a practicing attorney in Columbus, Ohio. He completed his undergraduate studies at Oakwood University, a Historically Black University in Alabama. There he discovered the transforming power of the Negro Spiritual; songs filled with not only hope, but a promise of a better tomorrow. Mr. Wright spends his free time engaged in some form of musical activity, whether it is singing as a member of the Broad Street United Methodist Church Chancel Choir, performing with the Opera Project Columbus, or just relaxing at home in front of the piano.

The Oberlin program is free and open to the public thanks to support from the Community Foundation of Lorain County and the Oberlin African-American Genealogy & History Group (OAAGHG). Doors open for the event at 6:30 p.m. For more information about this or other upcoming events on the Oberlin Heritage Center's program and tour calendar, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org or call (440) 774-1700.

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