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Gospel Music Roots Of Black America

By James Boyer, Ph.D.

In one sense, music and the Black American could be synonyms. It seems that Black people in America have always idolized their music, and created, performed and absorbed it at very deep levels. In this process they have become the most selective listeners in North America.

Gospel music today accounts for and epitomizes the roots of Black American life but has rarely received the journalistic attention which it deserved despite the fact that Black people have always respected the "message" of the music and associated it with the great protestant churches which

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Can 'You' Dig It? Try . . .

BAW to Enlighten All Ethnic Groups

Black Student Union of Kansas State University presents Black Awareness Week, February 6-12. The theme of the week is "WHICH WAY BLACK AMERICA." The purpose of the program is to enlighten and educate all ethnic groups, so we may become aware of Black America now and in the past.

Each day of the week is named after a famous black man in history specializing in specific areas that will be presented that day.

The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's Nine Pearl Ball tomorrow night will be the kickoff for the third annual Black Awareness Week at K-State.

The Ball, which is to be held at the Ramada Inn, will begin at 9 p.m.

During the Ball, nine outstanding black men on campus will be honored. These men were chosen by the sorority on the basis of their fellowship, scholarship and service to the university and community.

Proceeds from the Ball will go to raise money for scholarships to incoming freshmen.

The Eta Gamma Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority began on this campus in 1970. Since its establishment, the Chapter has rendered numerous services to the community, soldiers at Irwin Army Hospital and formed the United Black Voices. President of the chapter is Terri Henderson, senior in Computer Science. Mrs. Veryl Switzer is the alumni advisor.

A "Festival of Songs" honoring Mahalia Jackson, will be Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Forum Hall. The music for this day will be provided by the United Black Voices and also, the Interdenominational Choir from Kansas City, and the Voices of the Ghetto from Wichita.

The guest speaker will be Reverend Jonathan Yates. Jonathan, brother of Rev. Orlando Yates, is a freshman in sociology here at K-State.

Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson died Jan. 27 in Little Company of Mary Hospital in suburban Evergreen Park in Chicago.

Miss Jackson was well known for her spiritual singing. Several times, she turned down opportunities to sing pop or blues music, saying, she wanted to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

Miss Jackson was born Oct. 25 in New Orleans in a levee-sideshanty. She appeared before Presidents, did a command performance for the Queen of England, and sang for European monarchs and the Emperor Hirohito of Japan.

Mayor Charles Evers of Fayette, Miss. will be the speaker of the All University Convocation at 10:30 a.m. in the Auditorium Monday. This day is in remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Evers, was the first black candidate ever to run for governor of Mississippi. Described as being a tough, tall, strong man who, in his speaking, has left few toes unstomped. His topic Monday will be "The Black Man in America Today."

Charles Evers, made his debut in the public eye, in 1963 after his brother Medgar

Evers was assassinated. As the new Mississippi field director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, he for the first time, mobilized black voting power and effectively challenged the tradition of an all-white state party structure. Since then, Evers has become the political power in southwest Mississippi according to Rowland Evans and Robert Novak of the Washington Post.

It is appropriate that this day be in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. as both men worked for the same causes.

Martin Luther King, Jr. and his policy of nonviolence reached worldwide acclaim during the Montgomery boycott. He was invited throughout the country to lecture and tell the "Montgomery Story." He worked as president, in the beginning, of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. From there he organized the Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) and guided the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (S.N.C.C.) in Atlanta.

A "Night of Black Arts" will be presented Monday night, by Frank "Klorox" Cleveland featuring two one act plays in the Forum Hall. Admission to this event will be \$1.00. The plays will be Tuesday night also. Proceeds from this night will go to the Sickle Cell Anemia Fund.

Tuesday is Henry Ossawa Tanner day. A student art show will be held. Art work will be on display in the Union all day. Tim McClendon from the Kansas City Art Institute in Missouri will be in charge of a Art Workshop. He will also display some of his work. Mr. McClendon has presented art shows throughout the Midwest, according to Craig Watson, chairman of the art day.

Henry Ossawa Tanner was an American painter educated at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. In Atlanta, he worked as an illustrator and art instructor at Clark University. Tanner, who was born in 1859 was the recipient of the Lippincott Prize and the Silver Medal of the Paris Exposition in 1900. Tanner also received awards at the Buffalo Exposition, St. Louis Exposition, and a gold medal at San Francisco.

"Whats Going On" will be the theme of the benefit fashion show and dance Wednesday night. The action will take place at 7:30 in the Union Ballroom. During intermission, the Sisters of Soul, a group of black girls from the Foot will perform. Proceeds will again go to the Sickle Cell Anemia Fund.

On this day, Madame C. J. Walker is to be remembered. Madame Walker was known for her accomplishments in the business field. Born in Delta, La., Madame Walker moved to St. Louis at the age of 20 to work as a laundress and to attend school night. In 1905, she discovered a formula for improving the hair of the Negro. Later, she founded laboratories for the manufacture of various cosmetics.

Thursday is dedicated to Booker T. Washington. Dr. James Boyer, associate professor, Curriculum and Instruction here will conduct an Education Workshop in the

Union at 7:30 p.m. There will be a panel discussion and two films: "Black White Uptight and History of the Education of the Black Man."

Booker T. Washington, Negro leader and educator, was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin county, Virginia. In 1881 Washington was chosen to organize a school for Negroes at Tuskegee, Alabama. He rapidly developed Tuskegee, emphasizing industrial training.

An extremely powerful and effective public speaker, Washington lectured throughout the United States and Europe. His emphasis on Negro quiescence in the struggle for political and social rights met a receptive audience in America and Booker T. Washington became the principal spokesman for the Negro in America.

The Soul Food Banquet "Feast of Colors" will be Friday in the Union Ballroom. Tickets will be sold in the Union. George Washington Carver will be remembered on this day.

Carver, born in Diamond Grove, Mo. was the son of slaves. As a child Carver had a sharp and inquiring mind and an instinctive knowledge for plants.

A graduate of a high school in Minneapolis, Kansas, Carver went on to the State Agricultural College in Ames, Iowa and earned a bachelors degree. Carver did extensive work in finding uses for various plants and products including peanut oil uses.

Saturday night, the Friends of Distinction will present a concert in the Auditorium at 8 p.m. The Friends over the past three years have earned several gold records. Tonight, the last night of Black Awareness Week, Louis Armstrong will be honored. Tickets are on sale for \$2.50, \$3.00, and \$3.50 in the Union and at Condes.

Armstrong, noted jazz musician, was born in New Orleans. During his lifetime, Armstrong traveled all over the world with his trumpet mastering in jazz and novelty songs. He is also thought to be the first of the great modern jazz soloists.



Charles Evers To Speak at 10:30 a.m. All University Convocation on Monday

Black Music — Create, Create, Create

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built their doctrines and rituals on it. Black America, however, has become the hottest journalistic topic of the decade and with that upsurging interest in it, stage must come a description of the music which is actually the fore-runner of all other Black expressive forms.

From the day of overt slavery in this country, Black men and women used the strains and lyrics of the spirituals to communicate with each other and to inspire themselves to get through the days of laborious undertakings. When the field hands sang "Down By the Riverside," there was definite implications of cooler, more refreshing settings than those known to them at that time. Everyone who is knowledgeable about Black History knows that the a cappella singing of Black Americans provided both communication and solace to underground railroad passengers and still remains among the most beautiful of American art forms.

Gospel music, however, was often rejected by educated Blacks because it was not considered "cultured" to be a proponent of it. Few gospel singers had college-level formal training and, rightly so, kept the composition, performance and production of gospel music at a simple, beautiful level which "grass roots" America absorbed and appreciated. But more than its performance and recording was its communication of life-styles, concerns of poverty, and its hope for a better life. Much of the lyrics of gospel music speak directly to faith in God which is the undisputed basis upon which Black Americans emerged as a major force in this country. Despite the fact that church attendance is down in every religion in America, the Black church has had tremendous impact on its people, and those with the most impact have been those whose worship services make extensive use of this music.

The spirituals, as they were once called, reach deep into the folk history of southern Black America. They first came to world prominence as a "concert" form around 1871 with the celebrated Fisk Jubilee Singers. But the modern, true gospel sound with its earthy flavor and characteristic took on an improved element with the addition of musical instruments such as the organ, piano, bass and guitar. The first musical instruments used with this kind of music were the drums. Even today, except for the "classy" strings of the Percy Faith orchestra accompanying Mahalia Jackson or selected other minimal uses, gospel music depends primarily on the vocal interpretations, with rhythmic background. Gospel music may be in the form of an anthem, a shout, a jubilee, or a chant but the most appropriate setting for it is the typical Black Protestant Camp Meeting situation. Camp Meeting here refers not necessarily to a tent in a rural area because gospel music has been taken to the Apollo Theatre in New York, to Lincoln Center, as well as to major music festivals around the world held in Auditoriums and Opera Houses — but the idea is to have it performed in settings providing spiritual uplift. We still maintain that its major function today is inspirational rather than for entertainment.

Gospel music remains one of the purest and most unique American musical art forms with roots deep in the folk heritage of the American Black man. It reflects the important role which he has played in the development of a culture based on European and African patterns, but primarily of

this continent in its final development. The Eastman School of Music has at least one Master's Thesis on it called "A Theoretical Analysis of the Gospel Song: 1938-1964" done by Horace Boyer.

To religious Black Americans, gospel music captures the pure joy and deep sorrows of emotional feelings and transports them through song into a joyous experience. Both as a listener and as a performer, the commanding emotions and strong emotional appeal of these musical messages are a "renewing" experience. Within these roots and through this music, there is a pattern of continuity.

And continuity seems to be the most urgent call of Black America today. There needs to be major effort to preserve and unify Black people and their heritage from every vantage point. The very rhythms upon which most gospel songs are built are African in origin but they actually reflect life and vigor, two ingredients highly prized by the Black man.

More Than Music

Unlike opera, classics, or symphonic music, gospel music requires more than just performance. Hymns are not sung with the voice alone; they are sung with the heart and soul. Gospel music must be performed in an atmosphere of respect and acceptance and the listeners, for maximum benefit, must become a part of the musical experience. The most dynamic interpretations of sacred music are soul-stirring examples of reverence, depth, humility, devotion and artistry. It is free. And nothing is more important to Black America than freedom. The free and natural melodies, soul-felt rhythms, moody harmonies and undeniable sincerity are the ingredients of truly fine music but they are also ingredients of serious Black Americans.

The music which we call gospel music can be traced actually back to 1619 and the twelve-year-old settlement of Jamestown, Virginia. A Dutch freighter named "Man O' War" landed in Jamestown with twenty captured Africans. These African slaves were met by a small group of European white men, and with this meeting, a fusion of the culture of Europe and Africa began to take place. From that beginning and for the next three centuries, this music was both used and abused by whomever chose to do so — but it is the contribution of Black America to artistic expression.

Musical Development

In 1911, Billy Sunday, the traveling Evangelist (much like the Billy Graham of today) and his song leader, Homer Rodeheaver, were conducting a crusade in Atlanta. Twelve-year-old Thomas A. Dorsey was a member of the choir on "colored night," (the only night of the crusade that Black people were permitted to attend) and Dorsey decided that he would like to write and sing songs of this nature. Two years later, Dorsey and his family moved to Chicago. As far as history maintains, Dorsey was the first Black man to travel, sing and publish gospel music. (Several Black people in Philadelphia and Memphis had composed gospel songs but did not have the musical training or talent to notate their compositions.).

In 1921, Dorsey wrote his first gospel song and began a chain of activities which resulted in one of the major Black musical businesses to approach the whole world in this century. This business is the notation,

copyrighting and sale of sheet music of gospel songs as well as the sale of records.

Gospel music is capable of generating a sweeping rhythmic power and an emotional exultance unparalleled by any other. It is sung by fervent Black soloists, groups and choirs whose audience is the Black population in general but with special appeal to "grass-roots" America. It is performed primarily in Black Protestant churches and it commands emotional response in almost all settings.

Langston Hughes, the late celebrated poet-writer, once said that the "Gospel churches are the last refuges of Negro folk singing in the United States. As yet, nobody tampers with the joyous swing of the Gospel shouts in Black houses of worship. Their leaping, jumping rhythms, ecstatic cries, and joyous yells remain intact."

But gospel music assumed much of its present shape during the depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's when Dorsey moved from his role as pianist for a blues singer to his eminent role as creator of gospel music. He brought with him the beat and rhythm and supplied religious words, thus laying the foundation for the fibre of Mahalia Jackson's career.

Most gospel songs jump, roll, flow in rhythm, and cause the listener to either tap his feet or clap his hands or both. Most are built on the biblical epic: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord" and therefore is a happy music — very much an expression of people who sought happiness as opposed to the grimness of reality.

Soul Music

The entire business of commercial soul music owes its allegiance to the gospel song. The fertility and force of gospel music is the basis of Aretha Franklin's career as well as scores of other artists who are more widely known than gospel singers. Although gospel music by Black performers has no sizable white following, some groups and soloists have been able to carry it to every corner of the United States as well as to Europe and South America. For the most part, however, Black America supports these traveling gospel groups.

Contemporary Gospel Music Creators

Unlike many other forms of music, much of gospel music today is composed by the performers themselves. Most notable of the performing-composers is perhaps James Cleveland who has performed with a variety of groups and choirs. Cleveland's genius for combining ear-catching lyrics with rhythmic musical arrangement is unsurpassed. But before Cleveland, there was the late Roberta Martin who was credited with composing well over 300 gospel songs performed largely by the Roberta Martin Singers; there is also Clara Ward, still a talented composer; and there is Dorothy Love Coates who writes most of the selections she and the Gospel Harmonettes perform; and there is Albertana Walker and the Caravans who, as a group, have created some of gospel's most noted contemporary music. Miss Walker, incidentally, has spawned the gospel music careers of several leading singers. Another composer who never received adequate recognition for her writing is the late Ruth Davis (of Philadelphia's Davis Sisters) whose gospel shouts will always have an impact on gospel music. Two composers who have written extensively and who perform their compositions (and for whom this writer has great respect) are

Doris Akers who wrote "Lead Me, Guide Me" and Alex Bradford who wrote "Too Close to Heaven."

There are numerous other writers and arrangers of gospel music like Kenneth Morris, Sallie Martin, Casietta George, Shirley Caesar, Claude Jeter, James Herndon, Sammy Lewis, Inez Andrews, Edward & Edgar O'Neal, Horace and James Boyer, Margaret Aikens, Jeff and Charles Banks, Rosetta Tharpe, Bill Moss, Dorothy Norwood, Myrna Summers, and Thurston Frazier.

The most profound and famous of all gospel singers of course was Mahalia Jackson and while Miss Jackson was American's most widely-recognized interpreter of gospel music, her most famous renditions have not been her own compositions, but rather the refreshing and powerful performances of standard hymns and gospel songs by other composers. The same is true of singers like Brother Joe May, the Five Blind Boys, Bessie Griffin, the Violinaires, Soul Stirrers, and the Dixie Hummingbirds.

Two exceptional composers, however, have confined their compositions to a particular vein which, at one time or another, captures the attention of most gospel devotees. One is Mattie Moss Clark, the eminent directress of the Southwest Michigan State Choir and the other is Sullivan Pugh, the male half of the Consolers. Sister Clark, who also directs the Mason Memorial Choir of the Churches of God in Christ, International, has a unique message in her compositions which speak both poetically and prophetically to Black America: songs like "God Never Fails" and "Salvation is Free." Sullivan Pugh's compositions have emphasized a certain consciousness in songs like "Give Me My Flowers While I Live" and "May the Work I've Done Speak for Me."

There are thousands of other gospel songs, recorded and unrecorded, which speak especially to Black America and for whom Black America holds much esteem. While Dorsey's

"Precious Lord" is perhaps the most famous, all of gospel music tends to reflect an urgency which cannot be ignored. It is a growing music, an urgent music, and a thriving music. Lesser known gospel songs like Shirley Caesar's "Don't Drive Your Mama Away" and James Boyer's "I Can Feel God's Power" are frequently performed by local church choirs and reflect the sentiment of much of Black America. And every Black college student, at one time or another, has echoed Margaret Aiken's "Lord, Don't Let Me Fail."

Gospel Music Organizations

Gospel music has many organizations such as the publishing houses which specialize in gospel music but there are also Gospel Singing Conventions, Pentecostal Music Conferences and Music Workshops in addition to the thousands of local and city-wide Choir Unions, Quartette Conventions, and recurring Anniversaries. The Gospel Music Workshop of America, headed by James Cleveland, is perhaps the largest of its kind with the possible exception of the Gospel Singers Convention headed by Sallie Martin. Others included the Pentecostal Singers and Musicians Alliance, headed by Chicago's Anna Crockett Ford, and the Baptist Singing Convention with its state-level affiliates in practically every State but particularly in the South.

Publishing houses include Chicago's Martin & Morris Music Company, the Roberta Martin Studio of Gospel Music, and Detroit's Elma & Carl's Music Publishing Studio.

Despite the changes and refusals of many to appreciate the roots and the heritage of Black America, gospel music is very much a part of it and perhaps this is why the talented Black poetess, Nikki Giovanni, chose the church setting of a gospel choir for her recording debut of Black poetry. Gospel music is alive and well — and it will remain so as long as there are Black Americans who can feel its depth and understand its message.

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Come Dance and Enjoy an Evening of
"CRIMSON & CREAM"
with the Diamondnettes
at
Ramada Inn
Saturday, Feb. 26, 1972
9:00-until
\$ 1.00
B.Y.O.B.—Setups provided
KAPPAS and Diamondnettes Performing



... Free at last? ...



... Payment is due now (What We Gonna Do Brother?) ...

"A NIGHT IN BLACK ART"

Place—Forum Hall, KSU Student Union
Time—8 p.m.
Tickets—\$1.00

All proceeds to go to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Emergency Fund and The Sickle Cell Anemia Fund

"A Night in Black Art" will feature two original one-act plays, poetry and interpretive dancing.

I. Payment is Due Now (What We Gonna Do Brother?)

The scene is set in a rural South Carolina town. The cast includes (listed in order of appearance):

Bernard Franklin	..... Vern Jenkins
Wayne Dallas	..... Reggie (Slow) Brown
Larry Hopkins	..... Bill Bowens
Joey Ezell	..... Leroy Smith
Rick Sobek	..... Jerry Davidson
Dick Retrum	..... Rob Tyler
Kim Riley	..... Wayne Jackson
Winnona Dickson	..... Sis
P.J. White	..... Mrs. Crawford
Betty Hamilton	..... Dell
Dennis Tapsak	..... Sheriff

II. Free at Last

The story centers around a young man dealing with the problems of returning home to face ostracism, co-optation, and possible death.

Narrator	..... Sonny
Joey Ezell	..... J.W.
Frank Klorox Cleveland	..... the husband
Dick Retrum	..... the wife
Carol Russ	..... undertaker
Kim Riley	..... undertaker

"Free at Last" is a passionate and violent response to the death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The remaining portions of the presentation will be devoted to young Black poets and interpretive dancers.

Will You Be There?

FRIENDS OF DISTINCTION

IN CONCERT HERE AT K-STATE

Saturday, February 12

8 p.m. — Auditorium

Tickets Now on Sale at
Conde's and the Union
\$2.50-\$3.00-\$3.50

CHECK 'EM OUT!!!

Wead Speaks Wednesday

Rodney Wead was recently elected "Omaha's Man of the Year for 1971." He will speak in Forum Hall Wednesday morning, February 8, at 10:30 a.m.

Wead, the Executive Director of United Methodist Community Center (Wesley House) in Omaha is a strong believer in "Black capitalism." He believes in raising most of the money within the black community and black control of the businesses created with such funds. He has been the Key man in three "black capitalistic" ventures, one of which is the KOWH radio station.

Projects that he has completed include: Franklin Federal Community Credit Union, Legal Defense Fund, Scholarships for Minority Students, Black Radio Station, Afro-American Library, Television Program, Operation Now, Urban-Rural Crisis Fund. His future plans: organize Black Bank to serve the community and a Demolition company.

Test Yourself?

- A Black golfer who recently has been invited to play in a South African tournament.
- His flocculation test was hailed in America to determine the presence of syphilis.
- One of the nation's top Black models soon to appear in an M.G.M. movie, "Going Home."
- The first Black merchant marine captain in the U.S.
- A Black Chicago policeman known in the 40's and 50's as two-gun Pete because he carried two pearl-handled pistols.
- The first Black novelist in America and author of the book *The President's Daughter*.
- The University of Missouri had this woman as their first Black homecoming queen.
- Former head of S.N.C.C. who was seriously wounded in a shoot-out in front of a New York bar.
- A prominent Black poetess who currently has an album with some of her works contained on the album.

Choose from:

A. Pat Roberts Harris
B. Joyce Walker
C. H. Rap Brown
D. Stokely Carmichael
E. Jill Young
F. William A. Hinton
G. Nikki Giovanni
H. Hugh N. Mulzac
I. Leroy Jones
J. Sylvester Washington
K. Lee Elder
L. William Wells Brown
M. Mahalia Jackson

ANSWERS: K,F,B,H,M,J,T,L,G,C,G

The Only Way

To Go

**JOE and MOE
PRO
Right On!!!**

Sisters of Soul

Together we stand, together we fall, the S.O.S. can get along with all. Well, what is S.O.S.?

S.O.S., the Sisters of Soul, was organized in the summer of 1970. The club was organized for the need of "unity and togetherness" among the Community sisters. There are now 25 members in the club and the ages range from 12 to 18. As usual any club has their problems, but like other clubs, it managed during the hard times and now there is a real sense of belonging.

Some of their accomplishments include:

Christmas gifts for Head Start, and for two of the rest homes in Manhattan; Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Martin Luther King Memorial; Story Hour for tots in Community, Summer Day Care Project, Presented assembly at the Junior High and is working on an assembly for the Senior High's Black Awareness Week.

Also they organized classes at Douglass Center for the Community, Ballet for Pre-Schoolers, Modern Dance, private piano lessons, baton lessons, fundamentals of drawing, and adult crafts classes.

Their recent accomplishment was to write a proclom declaring the second week in February as "Black Awareness Week" for the city. This was presented to Mayor Robert Linder.

Their favorite pastime is having a monthly slumber party at one of their sponsors' houses.

Officers

President:

Roxane Lambert

Vice President:

Kim Henderson

Secretary:

Vivian Dane

Treasurer:

Dedra Dane

Sergeant at Arms:

Becky Morgan

Sponsors:

Mrs. Carol Parker
Mrs. Josephine Duliford

SCHEDULE FOR BLACK AWARENESS WEEK

FEBRUARY 6-12, 1972

Saturday, February 5	Second Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Nine Pearl Ball Theme: "AT THE CROSSROADS." \$2.50 Single; \$3.00 Couple Ramada Inn	
Sunday, February 6	Festival of Songs 1. Interdenominational Angelic Choir 2. Voices of Inter-faith Concert Choral 3. Jonathan Yates, Speaker 4. United Black Voices Forum Hall 3:00 p.m.	Mahalia Jackson
Monday, February 7	All University Convocation Speaker: Charles Evers Time: 10:30 a.m. Kansas State University Auditorium Sponsored by Black Student Union and University Convocation Committee.	Martin Luther King
	Night of Black Art "Payment is Due Now" "Free at Last" Forum Hall 8:00 p.m. Donations: \$1.00. Proceeds: Sickle Cell Anemia	
Tuesday, February 8	Art Show Tim McClendon, Kansas City Art Institute Kansas State Union	Henry Ossawa Tanner
	Night of Black Art Forum Hall 8:00 p.m. Donations: \$1.00	
Wednesday, February 9	Musical Group (Student) Union Court Yard 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.	Madame C. J. Walker
	Benefit Fashion Show and Dance Theme: "What's Going On." Kansas State Union Ballroom 7:30 p.m. Donations: Proceeds to Sickle Cell Anemia	
Thursday, February 10	Educational Workshop Dr. James Boyer Kansas State Union 7:30	Booker T. Washington
Friday, February 11	Soul Food Banquet Theme: "Feast of Colors" Kansas State Union Ballroom 6:30 p.m. \$2.25	George Washington Carver
Saturday, February 12	Concert FRIENDS OF DISTINCTION Kansas State University Auditorium 8:00 p.m. \$2.50 — \$3.00 — \$3.50	Louis Armstrong