

African American History Lecture: An evening of Reflection & Inspiration



“Dr. Jackson gave an impressive and impactful African-American lecture. He helped to connect the dots of time for us up to the present era, so much so that those attending sat on the edge of their seats waiting on what he would share with us next. We were awakened by his presentation and we were encouraged to research more about ourselves in the coming days.” – Mr. Micheal Bryant, a coordinator of the African American History Lecture.

This lecture was held in observance of Black History Month and was sponsored by the Thomasville-Thomas County FAMU Alumni Association in partnership with Thomas University, First Missionary Baptist Church, Bishop Hall Charter School and the Thomas County Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. Reverend Jeremy G. Rich and First Missionary Baptist Church (FMBC) welcomed a robust attendance for this past Monday night’s Black History lecture.

Dr. David H. Jackson, Jr. Ph.D. – a Professor of History at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University in Tallahassee was the guest lecturer for the evening. He is regarded as one of the most published professors at FAMU, who areas of interest include ancient Africa with an emphasis on Egypt, Latin America with an emphasis on Brazil, and African-American history. His current research interests include: African-American business history, the Jim Crow era, racial violence, Southern history, African-American biographies, and the age of Booker T. Washington.

Charlie Ward, Sr. – a 1964 FAMU graduate and retired Educator – served as the Master of Ceremonies. A warm greeting was extended to all lecture attendees by Reginald Knight – a 1978 FAMU graduate and retired Educator. Then, everyone stood and sang a rousing rendition of the National Black Anthem, James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Every Voice and Sing” in unison. Nathan Wilson – a 1967 FAMU graduate and retired Educator – played the piano beautifully before and during “Lift Every Voice and Sing”. The invocation was rendered by the Reverend Dr. Warren C. Hope, a professor of Educational Leadership at Florida A&M University.

Dr. Hazel T. Jones – a 1967 FAMU graduate, retired Educator, and current Thomasville City School Board Member – gave the occasion and recognized the distinguished guests who were in attendance. At that point, FMBC Minister of Music Carolyn Henry accompanied the First Missionary Baptist Church Recording Choir as Reverend Rich sang the lead in a brilliant performance of the song: God Is.” Melanie Hill – a 1993 graduate of FAMU and Office Administrator – introduced to some and presented to others the evening’s guest lecturer: Dr. David H. Jackson, Jr.

Dr. Jackson’s impressive reputation had preceded him. He spoke powerfully and hauntingly on the many contributions African-Americans have made upon the world in general and upon the United States of American in particular. His lecture was an address covering a dazzling array of topics ranging from music to mathematics, science to social justice, and liberty to literature. Dr. Jackson’s nearly encyclopedic knowledge of African-American history was on full display. He somehow managed to incorporate facts about his own upbringing and little-known historical facts about the prominent role Florida A&M University played before, during, and after the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Jackson seamlessly conducted the lecture with humor, relevance, and gravitas.

Immediately following the completion of his lecture, Dr. Jackson left the podium and sat closer to the audience alongside Dr. Gale Whitehurst – professor of History at Thomas University. Dr. Whitehurst moderated a Question & Answer session with the lecture attendees. Several members of those in the audience had the opportunity to offer their questions to Dr. Jackson; who took great care to answer their questions thoughtfully and thoroughly.

Dr. Gale Whitehurst, the senior professor at Thomas University, who was the moderator of the Q & A Period, commented: “Dr. Jackson's love and admiration for FAMU was obvious to all his listeners. The breath of his knowledge of the past as well as the present of that institution was outstanding. It is no wonder that he rose so quickly in the world of academia as it is obvious he has a passion for his subject. The question and answer session showcased the depth of his extensive knowledge, not only of FAMU and its role in the Civil Rights Movement, but of African American history in general. I was proud that the students of Thomas University had the privilege of hearing such an intellectual and passionate speaker.”



After the end of the Q&A session, Michael Bryant – a 1994 graduate of FAMU and Congressional Field Representative – gave remarks. Then, Reverend Rich – himself a 2005 graduate of FAMU, Pastor of FMBC, Educator and Coordinator of this event – gave the benediction. Afterwards, Dr. Jackson was kind enough to greet the members of the audience and take photos with them.

Dr. Jackson then greeted those in attendance at the reception and book signing which took place immediately following the lecture. Mrs. Edna Hardy-Hill said: “Dr. Jackson is so very knowledgeable of American and Egyptian/African history. I am glad that I came.”

Reverend Rich offered: “I was especially pleased to see all the young people in attendance tonight. Black history is American history; I believe that while this is true during the month of February, it is also true throughout all the months of the year as well. America’s diversity is one of its great strengths. For these reasons, I thank all members of the beloved community who came out to our first African-American History Lecture.”

WRITTEN BY: Rev. Arthur L. Jones, III

THOMASVILLE, GA – February 12th, 2014