

GSU marks centennial of tragic race riot

Special to The Atlanta Voice
Georgia State's Rialto Center for the Arts and the Student Center Speaker's Auditorium will host events during a weekend-long commemoration of the tragic Atlanta race riots that in 1906 robbed 27 Atlantans of their lives.

During the summer of 1906, white fears of African-Americans' increasing economic and social power, sensationalized rhetoric from white politicians and unsubstantiated news stories about a black grime wave created a powder keg of racial tension, which exploded the night of Sept. 22 in what became known as the Atlanta Race Riot. By the time the riot ended on Sept. 25, at least 25 blacks and two whites lay dead.

The Coalition to Remember the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot, with funding in part by a grant from the Georgia Humanities Council, has initiated a series of events the weekend of Sept. 21-24 in remembrance of the riots to facilitate open and ongoing dialogue among the city's diverse communities and to inspire positive systemic change in Atlanta's race relations.

The opening of "Red Was the Midnight: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot Exhibit" at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site Visitors' Center will begin the weekend commemoration Sept. 21.

Georgia State professor of history Cliff Kuhn, a key organizer in the Coalition and an expert in Atlanta history, will preside over a day of programs Sept. 22 at the Student Center Speaker's Auditorium in the Student Center Building at 44 Courtland St. The programs will include speakers, films and stories from descendants of victims and other people affected by the riot.

Charles Jones, assistant professor of African-American Studies, will moderate the family stories from 2 - 3:45 p.m. Eight descendants of victims of the riot will be on hand to tell the stories of their relatives' involvement in the bloody days that forever changed Atlanta.

Harvey K. Newman, professor of public administration and urban studies in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, has also conducted extensive research and published articles on the 1906 race riots. Newman's area of expertise focuses on the response of the faith community leaders to the riot, and the policy responses to the riot by the city of Atlanta.

The Rialto Center for the Arts, at 80 Forsyth St. NW, will hold the final day's events and closing ceremonies Sept. 24, which will include the presentation of the Phoenix Award—the highest service award bestowed by the city—to the Coalition by Mayor Shirley Franklin's office.

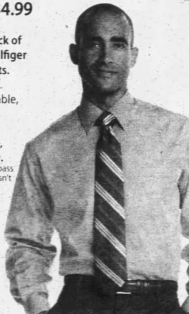
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