

**Public Affairs Section**  
**U.S. Embassy, Gaborone, Botswana**  
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## Press Release

### **U.S. Embassy and University of Botswana Commemorate Black History Month**

The United States Embassy is proud to join the University of Botswana in hosting a film festival to commemorate Black History Month from February 25 – 27. The University will also conduct a debate event on February 28 as part of the commemoration. The film screenings and the debate event will begin at 5:00 pm in the University of Botswana Library auditorium. After each film, Dr. Maude Dikobe, UB English Lecturer, will lead a panel discussion.

U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Michael J. Murphy will join officials from the University of Botswana on Monday, February 25 at 5:00 pm to launch the film festival. The launch event will take place prior to the evening’s film screening in University of Botswana Library auditorium. Members of the press and public are invited to attend.

Films to be screened include:

Monday:      Biography of Barack Obama  
Tuesday:     America Beyond the Color Line  
Wednesday:  The March

#### **Background:**

Black History Month is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and contributions to U.S. society of African Americans.

President Barack Obama said, “African American history is an essential thread of the American narrative that traces the Nation's enduring struggle to perfect itself. Each February, African American History Month is recognized as a moment to reflect upon how far we have come as a Nation, and what challenges remain.”

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) has selected “At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington” as the 2013 theme for Black History Month.

On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation set the United States on the path of ending slavery. A wartime measure issued by President Abraham Lincoln, the proclamation freed relatively few slaves, but it fueled the fire of the enslaved to strike for their freedom.

In 1963, a century later, America once again stood at the crossroads. Nine years earlier, the U.S. Supreme Court had outlawed racial segregation in public schools, but the nation had not yet committed itself to equality of citizenship. On August 28, 1963, hundreds of thousands of Americans marched to the memorial of Abraham Lincoln, the author of the Emancipation Proclamation, in the continuing pursuit of equality of citizenship and self-determination.

It was on this occasion that Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his celebrated “I Have a Dream” speech. Just as the Emancipation Proclamation had recognized the coming end of slavery, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom announced that the days of legal segregation in the United States were numbered.

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