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Taylor Tomlinson

Ouachita Baptist University

Ouachita News Bureau

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Ouachita to host civil rights panel discussion March 17

By Taylor Tomlinson

March 10, 2014

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Ouachita Baptist University's Riley-Hickingbotham Library will host a panel discussion on civil rights Monday, March 17, at 6 p.m. in Walker Conference Center Room A. The event, which is part of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)'s Created Equal Project, is free and open to the public.

The discussion will highlight the history of the civil rights movement in the U.S. and more specifically, civil rights issues in Arkansas and Arkadelphia. Background for most of the discussion will come from the documentary film "Freedom Riders," which recounts the harsh realities of the Freedom Rides of 1961.

"The panel will bring together a cross section of historians and active participants of the civil rights struggle," said Lacy Wolfe, assistant professor and circulation/reference librarian. "Every student should take this opportunity to learn firsthand about the impact of the civil rights movement from people who participated in it."

The three panelists leading the discussion will include Dr. Martin Halpern, professor of history at Henderson State University; Dr. Lewis Shepherd, vice president for student and external affairs at HSU; and Kyle Jones, scholar coordinator for the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program at HSU.

According to the NEH website, Created Equal is an initiative to "encourage communities across the country to revisit the history of civil rights in America and to reflect on the ideals of freedom and equality."

"From my perspective, the perspective of someone who grew up in another world to which I would not want to return, this session is not to be missed by people of good will who are also willing to be reminded of what good and ill will look like in the arena of human society," said Dr. Ray Granade, Ouachita director of library services and professor of history.

Henderson State University's librarian, David Sesser, received a grant for the *Created Equal* project, in partnership with OBU's Riley-Hickingbotham Library and the Arkadelphia Public Library. In addition to the panel at OBU, the public library will host an article discussion over the short film "Slavery by Another Name" on Thursday, April 10, at 10 a.m. and a children's program Saturday, April 12, at 10 a.m. HSU also previously hosted a lecture as part of the project.

"These events are important as they help bring the ongoing struggle to campus so that students and the local community can connect with them," added Wolfe. "The civil rights movement is relevant today as people across the country continue to strive for equality for all in the United States."

Learn more about the Created Equal Project at <http://createdequal.neh.gov>. For more information, contact Lacy Wolfe at wolfel@obu.edu or (870) 245 5119