



Civil Rights Era Photos from Local Journalist on Display at Bowie State

(BOWIE, Md.) – A Maryland Historical Society* photography exhibition, depicting African American life during the Civil Rights era, will be on display at Bowie State University’s Student Center from Feb. 4 – May 22, 2020. The “Paul Henderson: Photographs from the Civil Rights Era” exhibition features select prints from one of the Baltimore Afro-American’s first photographers and provides an opportunity for the public to help identify unknown photo subjects.

An opening reception, taking place Tuesday, Feb. 4 from 4-6 p.m. in the Student Center lobby, is free and open to the public. The Bowie State exhibition illustrates the joys and trials of everyday life in Maryland’s African American community, including NAACP activities, protests, sporting events, and church groups.

“As Maryland’s oldest historically black university, Bowie State is honored to host this important exhibition. It is an excellent way to engage the public and our students in learning about African American heritage and culture during a pivotal time in our nation’s history,” said Kimetta Hairston, BSU special assistant to the president for strategic engagement. “Paul Henderson’s Civil Rights era photographs offer a glimpse into the historical roots of the African American community’s struggle for equal treatment under the law, which has implications for today’s fight for civil rights.”

Spanning his nearly 40-year career, the entire [Henderson Collection](#) contains more than 7,000 negatives and prints, many of which have not been identified. Civil rights attorney Thurgood Marshall, actress/singer Pearl Bailey, performer and civil rights activist Paul Robeson, iconic gospel singer Mahalia Jackson and the Baltimore activist known as Maryland’s “mother of civil rights,” Dr. Lillie May Carroll Jackson are among the familiar faces appearing in the collection. However, most photo subjects are unknown.

The exhibition provides an opportunity for the public to assist the Maryland Historical Society in identifying people, places and events pictured in the collection. Smartphone users are encouraged to use QR codes printed on exhibit labels to complete a survey, where they can submit names and other information. Print identification forms will also be available. In addition, hundreds more Henderson prints will be on hand at the Feb. 4 opening reception for the public to peruse and help label unidentified images.

“The Paul Henderson Photograph Collection is among the most important collections in MdHS’ holdings,” says Joe Tropea, exhibit curator and curator of films and photographs at MdHS. “Because Henderson worked from the 1930s through the early 1960s, he left behind crucial materials that have enabled historians to more fully tell the story of the early Civil Rights Movement in Maryland.”

The historic exhibition will be featured in the Student Center, lobby from February 4 – May 22, 2020. The lobby is open to the public during the building’s normal hours when the campus is open for business: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 12 a.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. – 12 a.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

More information about the exhibition and photos are available at bowiestate.edu/blackhistorymonth. To learn more about MdHS, please visit mdhistory.org.

* Now the Maryland Center for History and Culture.

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About Bowie State University

Bowie State University (BSU) is an important higher education access portal for qualified persons from diverse academic and socioeconomic backgrounds, seeking a high-quality and affordable public comprehensive university. The university places special emphasis on the science, technology, cybersecurity, teacher education, business, and nursing disciplines within the context of a liberal arts education. For more information about BSU, visit bowiestate.edu.

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The Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) collects, preserves, and interprets the history, art, and culture of Maryland. Originally founded as the Maryland Historical Society in 1844, MCHC offers a museum, library, and education programs to inspire critical thinking, creativity, and community. Learn more at mdhistory.org.

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