



TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Misc. Student Activities

File: ~~Black Student Organization~~
Black Cultural Center

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MILLION MAN MARCH FOCUS OF "GREAT DEBATE" AT TENNESSEE TECH

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. (April 11, 1996) -- Part debate competition, part theater and part pageant, "The Great Debate" challenges audiences to consider issues of special importance to African-Americans from the perspective of this country's two most prominent civil rights activists: Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

Tennessee Technological University's chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity sponsors "The Great Debate" at Tennessee Tech's Derryberry Hall Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 17. Dr. Amiri Al-Hadid, chair of the Africana Studies Department at Tennessee State University, produces the event.

About 30 TSU students will present a production/debate on the proposition "The Million Man March: Atonement, Rebirth and Extended Family." The Million Man March was a gathering of African-American men for a march in Washington, D.C., last October promoting unity and responsibility. The Tennessee Tech date marks the premier of this production.

Al-Hadid calls the Great Debate "an intellectual and cultural forum," in which college students debate current issues from either King's or Malcolm X's perspective or from a third, "synthesis" perspective — one that unifies both leaders' views. The cultural aspects include drama, dance, poetry and an African fashion show. The two-hour production, which is scripted and rehearsed like a play, includes participants pouring libations, reciting a traditional African invocation and singing the Black national anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

"To some extent," Al-Hadid says, "this debate compares and contrasts the Million Man March with the August 1963 civil rights march on Washington, D.C., led by King."

Al-Hadid began "The Great Debate" in 1985. Last spring, the debate focused on the purpose of Africana Studies at historically Black colleges and coincided with the opening of the Africana Studies Department at TSU.

Al-Hadid has also traveled with debate teams to Morehouse University in Atlanta and Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio. Later this month, the first annual intercollegiate debate in Nashville pits TSU (taking the synthesis position) against Vanderbilt University (promoting King's perspective) and Fisk University (advancing the views of Malcolm X) in a debate about the Million Man March at TSU April 20.

For more information, call Parrish Monk at 520-3780.

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