

News Release

Board of Commissioners to co-host speaking events on the Women's Suffrage Movement and African American women

January 22, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – The Board of Commissioners has partnered with Oakland University and Oakland Community College to host award-winning author, speaker and educator Michelle Duster on February 10 and 11. Duster is the great-granddaughter of Ida B. Wells, who was a prominent African American journalist, abolitionist and feminist during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At these events, which take place during Black History Month, Duster will speak about the Women's Suffrage Movement from the perspective of women of color.

These free lectures are part of the Board's year-long celebration of women's suffrage and are open to the public.

"It is a great honor to have the opportunity to learn from Michelle Duster, the great-granddaughter of renowned suffragette Ida B. Wells," Board Vice Chairwoman **Marcia Gershenson** (D-Bloomfield Hills), said. "Race relations between women activists trying to pass the 19th amendment were often fraught with prejudices and tension, so we're lucky to have Ms. Duster adding the black perspective to this important conversation."

The events take place over two days. Duster will speak at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, February 10 at the Oakland Center on the campus of Oakland University. She will also speak at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 11 at the Royal Oak Campus Auditorium of Oakland Community College. Register at bit.ly/MD20U for Monday's event at Oakland University or at bit.ly/MD20CC for Tuesday's event at Oakland Community College.

"Oakland University is honored to serve as one of the venue co-hosts for this Oakland County Board of Commissioners event to recognize and honor the role of abolitionist and feminist Ida. B. Wells and others

involved in the women's suffrage movement," Rochelle Black, Oakland University vice president for government and community relations, said.

In addition to these two public discussions, Duster will be presenting to students at Southfield High School on February 11.

"The suffrage movement gave women the right to vote and served as a powerful force that improved the rights of women in many other areas," OCC trustee and former board chair Shirley Bryant, said. "We are proud to honor this movement and celebrate the outstanding women who continue to break barriers and create change through education."

On March 14, 2019, the Board established the Celebration of Women's Suffrage Ad Hoc Committee. Gershenson serves as chair of the committee, which also includes Commissioners **Angela Powell** (D-Pontiac) and **Tom Kuhn** (R-Troy). Throughout 2020, the committee will invite Oakland County residents to learn more about the history of women's suffrage through a variety of programming and events.

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

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