



**PRESS RELEASE: Act on Racism Troupe from GVSU to Perform at Jim Crow Museum Grand Opening**

**Sandy C Gholston** to: Archive

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Included below is a press release regarding the upcoming on-campus performance of the Act on Racism troupe from sister institution Grand Valley State University. The group will perform in conjunction with the grand opening of the new Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University in Big Rapids. Any questions about this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, News Services and Social Media Manager.

To view the online version of this story, visit:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2012/april/actonracism.htm>

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**Act on Racism Troupe from GVSU to Perform at Jim Crow Museum Grand Opening**

BIG RAPIDS – The mission is the same, but one is doing it with a museum filled with artifacts. Another is doing it on a stage.

The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University strives to become a leader in social activism and in the discussion of race and race relations. Act on Racism at Grand Valley State University models anti-racist activity through performance to increase awareness of racism and to extend dialogue.

GVSU's student troupe will perform during grand-opening festivities Thursday, April 26 for the new \$1.3 million, 3,300-square-foot Jim Crow Museum on the Big Rapids campus. The group's performance is "meant to be a teaching tool," said Nicholas Campau, coordinator of Student Life at Ferris.

"The program is designed to encourage open dialogue as it relates to diversity, inclusion, tolerance, social justice and race on a college campus," Campau said. "The Jim Crow Museum was designed to teach by 'using objects of intolerance to teach tolerance and promote social justice.' This presentation complements the museum by teaching tolerance and promoting social justice through acting."

Students and community members will benefit from seeing the performance, scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. in the Rankin Student Center's Centennial Dining Room, he said.

"This presentation supports two of our core values: diversity and learning. This is an opportunity to see how acts of intolerance and racism can affect everyday people," Campau said. "We are

then able to challenge and address issues as a university community.”

Act on Racism, created in 2005 by GVSU Sociology professor Jennifer Stewart, features a core group of about 15 actors diverse in racial/ethnic backgrounds and in academic majors relaying instances of racism and discrimination before audiences in a workshop setting. On Thursday, the group will perform “Remembrance,” which features about 10 skits interspersed with poetry and narratives.

“What we do fits with the mission of the museum,” Stewart said. “While painful, it’s a part of our past and we want to prevent it from happening again.

“My students aren’t professional actors, but their raw, honest depiction of real things draws in the audience. They don’t get paid, they don’t get credit. They do this because of their genuine belief that it makes a difference.”

Thursday’s grand opening begins with a reception and ceremony at 10 and 11 a.m., respectively, in the Williams Auditorium lobby before the scene shifts to the Rankin Student Center. A “Conversation with David Pilgrim” is set for 1 p.m. in the Art Gallery. Pilgrim, the university’s vice president for Diversity and Inclusion and the museum’s founder and curator, will be followed at 2 p.m. by a “Conversation with Jon McDonald,” a professor at Ferris’ Kendall College of Art and Design, who painted the “Cloud of Witnesses” mural in the new museum. Festivities conclude with the Act of Racism performance.

Admission is free for all events, and museum tours will be conducted from 1 to 5 p.m.

For more about the Jim Crow Museum, visit:

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/>

Learn more about the activities taking place in conjunction with the grand opening:

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/grandopening.htm>

Follow the Jim Crow Museum on Facebook, here:

<https://www.facebook.com/JimCrowMuseum>

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