



For Immediate Release

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CCHM Speaker Series

First Families: The Next Generation

Vancouver, WA – Clark County Historical Museum will launch its 2022 Speaker Series on Thursday, February 3, with Melissa Williams’ presentation of “First Families: The Next Generation.” The event will occur in-person at the Clark County Historical Museum. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the event begins at 7 p.m.

Join us as historian, Melissa Williams, and Rites of Passages Youth Program director, Charles Simmons, explore the generation that came after the individuals featured in the Vancouver NAACP’s publication *First Families of Vancouver’s African American Community*. Learn about the events that shaped their lives and the impact they’ve had on Clark County.

Melissa Williams (she/her) is a U.S. historian who focuses on African American history. Over the past 20 years, she has contributed to several projects for organizations and institutions including the Center for Columbia River History, Vancouver NAACP #1139, U.S. Forest Service, Clark County Historical Museum, Washington State University Vancouver, and Portland State University. Williams earned a B.A. in History from the University of Washington and an M.A. in Public History from Washington State University Vancouver. She is a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Portland State University and currently serves as Policy Associate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Charles LaRue Simmons is founder and director of Rites of Passage Youth Program, a summer program dedicated to building skills and providing experiences for African-American Youth. Simmons earned Life-Time K-12 Teaching Certification with a Bachelor in Literature and minors in Black Studies and Political Science from the University of Washington. He is a life-long educator, teaching for the Vancouver, Evergreen, and Washougal School Districts before founding Rites of Passage. Simmons has been a member of the Vancouver NAACP #1139 since 1964.

The CCHM Speaker Series is sponsored by the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission and Versa Events (formerly Wager Audio). General admission is \$5; seniors and students are \$4; children under 18 are \$3; and the evening is free for CCHM members, veterans, and active-duty military personnel.

Attendees are encouraged to arrive early, as it is seating is limited. For the safety of staff, visitors, and our families, CCHM does require proof of vaccination for admission to all CCHM events.

For more information, contact the museum at 360-993-5679 or outreach@cchmuseum.org.

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