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Ukweli: Searching for Healing Truth series debuts at McLeod Plantation Historic Site Five-part poetry, lecture and dialogue series begins Sept. 26

(CHARLESTON COUNTY) – The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission's (CCPRC) McLeod Plantation Historic Site on James Island introduces a five-part poetry, lecture and dialogue series on Sept. 26. Called Ukweli: Searching for Healing Truth, the events feature poet and writer Horace Mungin and are held every other Saturday this fall.

Ukweli is Swahili for "truth." Mungin, in search of healing truth, will read from his series of poems on American history against a backdrop of racial disparities. Scholars will contextualize Black perspectives of that history, and radio host Osei Chandler will moderate the discussions.

The first event in the fall series, "A Dark Darkness," will be held Saturday, Sept. 26. Each event is held from 1- 2:30 p.m. and focuses on a different selection of poems. Each event will be capped to and free of charge to the first 50 participants. No preregistration is required. Ukweli: Searching for Healing Truth is made possible by CCPRC's non-profit partner, the Charleston County Parks Foundation, and the generous support of The Joanna Foundation. The event series and its themes are as follows:

Sept. 26: A Dark Darkness

The poems "Khadija" and "The Lashing of Patsey of Bayou Boeuf Plantation" recall the Atlantic Slave Trade and the brutal treatment allotted to Africans after arrival. In this exploration, led by author Herb Frazier, it is revealed how slave labor built the American economy that privileged so many generations of white Americans.

Oct. 10: Black Women in History

The poem "Ain't I a Woman" borrows its title from Sojourner Truth's famous 1855 speech. Black women are often portrayed as assisting Black men in directing the struggle for emancipation and equality; however, history reveals Black women as leaders in the black liberation struggle. Dr. Karen Meadows shows how women did not need to be convinced to aid men in the struggle; rather, they

Oct. 24: The Dehumanization of Africans in America and Jim Crow

The poem "America" addresses the long history of race in America and "Jim Crow" discusses how government institutionalized inequality. Historian Damon Fordham will explore how many white people reconciled the conflict slavery and Jim Crow presented to a democracy where all are purported to be equal, and how many whites convinced themselves African people were sub-human to justify enslavement and later subjection to second-class citizenship.

Nov. 7: The Bible and the Rope

In 1919, America was in the grips of deadly violence. Mostly initiated by whites, it erupted in cities across the country, including here in Charleston. Mungin's "Red Summer of 1919" and Imam Hakim Abdul Ali explore how mobs, terrorists, civic organizations, law enforcement, and the justice system have used tools like the Bible and rope to oppress, intimidate and harm black people.

Nov. 21: Establishing the Literary Link

The poem "God's Pen in Their Hands" presents Black women who applied the power of the pen to resist and oppose the oppression and unequal treatment of Black people. Yvette Murray will illustrate how black women were often the leading literary voices during many of the crucial periods of racial conflict and turmoil such as the lynching and civil rights eras.

Charleston County Parks currently requires guests to wear masks when at special events such as the Ukweli Series. Exceptions are when guests are exercising or actively eating or drinking. For those who prefer not to attend in person, the Ukweli Series programs will also be streamed via Facebook Live from the McLeod Plantation Historic Site page (<https://www.facebook.com/McLeodPlantation>).

CCPRC opened McLeod Plantation as a public county park and historic site in 2015. Located on James Island, McLeod Plantation Historic Site is a former sea island cotton plantation and an important 37-acre Gullah-Geechee heritage site carefully preserved in recognition of its cultural and historical significance. After years of careful research and restoration, the historic site today is a living tribute to the men and women who persevered in their efforts to achieve freedom, equality and justice. Visitors embark upon an in-depth exploration of the lives of those people whose stories are essential to understanding Charleston's complex past and helped shape who we, as a nation, are today. For more information on McLeod Plantation Historic Site, visit CharlestonCountyParks.com/McLeod or call 843-795-4386.

The mission of CCPRC is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes six land parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, a historic plantation site, three waterparks, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services - festivals, camps, classes, programs, volunteer opportunities, and more. For more information on CCPRC, call 843-795-4386, download Charleston County Parks' mobile app, or visit charlestoncountyparks.com.