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PR Firm CEO to Speak at MSCC Black History Program

Michael Steele, president and chief executive officer of Advantage Communications, Inc., of Little Rock will be the featured speaker at Mid-South Community College's Black History Month program on Friday, Feb. 10.



Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend the event which is scheduled to begin at 11:15 a.m. in the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Educational Excellence on MSCC's South Campus. The theme for the program is "Raising My Standards to Achieve My Dream."

"It is such an honor to have Mr. Steele as our featured speaker," said Tony Wilson, MSCC Student Activities Coordinator. "He's known throughout Arkansas and the entire country for his passion to share his knowledge about raising personal, academic, career, and professional standards to be successful."

"Several of our students participating in the STAND Student Leadership Institute had an opportunity to hear Mr. Steele speak during a workshop last summer. They left the workshop with a lot of excitement and motivation, and they shared that energy with our Student Activities Committee while discussing potential speakers for our program. It's great when students take such an active role in the planning of these kinds of events."

Steele, known as a marketing and media innovator in both domestic and international markets, has more than 25 years of promotional experience, including pioneering work in brand marketing with the Stroh Brewery Company and Coca-Cola.

A graduate of Western Michigan University (B.S.) and Bowling Green State University (M.B.A.), Steele founded Advantage Communications Inc. of Little Rock. ACI is considered one of the fastest-growing, multi-cultural, marketing, advertising and public relations agency in the Mid-South. He built the company on the premise of “Creating Economic Value” for his clients.

“I wake up every morning with an attitude of winning,” he said during an interview aired on Black Entertainment Television (BET).

A one-time professional player in the National Basketball Association (Milwaukee Bucks 1974) and the Continental Basketball Association, Steele brings that competitive edge to his work.

Steele established an enviable track record for new-product innovations including Stroh’s Light, Diet Coke, Equa, and HomePower loan products. His work at the helm of Advantage Communications has been recognized by Alltel, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and Dollar and Sense Magazine.

ACI clients include Verizon Wireless, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Arkansas Department of Health HIV/STD Hepatitis C Section, Central Arkansas Water, ARVEST Bank, the Minority Initiative of Stamp Out Smoking, Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center, and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services.

During the Feb. 10 program, several MSCC students will participate as greeters in addition to leading the national anthem, invocation, and purpose.

Other activities for MSCC’s Black History Month observance include a voter registration drive, a “Raising My Standards to Achieve My Dreams” discussion series on three consecutive Wednesdays beginning Feb. 15, African-American HIV Awareness/Testing Day in Collaboration with East Arkansas Family Health Center, a diversity awareness event (Million Dollar Quartet at the Orpheum), and a field trip to the Civil Rights Museum.

MSCC students will also participate in a statewide “African American Mentoring Initiative” on Feb. 23-24 at Pulaski Technical College in Little Rock. Minority male mentoring groups from all Arkansas four- and two-year colleges will gather for a series of motivational and informational empowerment workshops about exercising self-discipline and embracing academic and social support.

Guest speakers will include National Football League players, businessmen, and administrators of statewide college Male Mentoring programs. The event is a collaborative effort of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Rockefeller Foundation, and MSCC's participation is made possible by a Title III Predominantly Black Institutions grant.

For more information on Black History Month or other student activities at MSCC, please call Tony Wilson (870) 733-6702.

The U.S. has recognized African-American history annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month." In 1915, historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson proposed a week-long celebration to honor the history and contributions of African-Americans. Nine years later, his dream became reality.

Woodson, born to parents who were former slaves, chose the second week of February to pay tribute to the birthdays of two Americans who dramatically affected the lives of blacks: Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and Frederick Douglass (February 14). The week-long observance officially became Black History Month in 1976.

Woodson, a graduate of Harvard University, the University of Chicago, and Berea College, established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now called the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) in 1915, and a year later founded the widely respected Journal of Negro History.