



EXPLORATION PLACE

THE SEDGWICK COUNTY SCIENCE AND DISCOVERY CENTER

300 North McLean Boulevard
Wichita, Kansas 67203
316.660.0600

exploration.org |      

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Contact: Laura Roddy, Chief Advancement Officer
laura.rodny@exploration.org, 316-660-0602

Distinctive New Display Celebrates Black History Month ***African American scientists displayed on Exploration Place building***

WICHITA, Kansas - In collaboration with The Kansas African American Museum and the National Informal STEM Education Network, Exploration Place is celebrating Black History Month with a large-scale outdoor display.

Each night during February, Exploration Place will honor African American pioneers in earth and space sciences by projecting giant portraits onto the side of its iconic island building. The displays will be freely viewable from the Arkansas riverfront path, identified in a recent survey as the busiest pedestrian and bicycle pathway in Wichita.

Visitors are encouraged to visit the display, take and share photos, and use the opportunity to recognize the positive impact of African American scientists on society. Guests are also invited to stay to watch the nightly 7 p.m. Ring of Fire lighting at the Keeper of the Plains and view 12 new riverfront banners featuring a selection of women in STEM careers.

Changing weekly through the month, the display will honor:

- Feb 1-7: Katherine Johnson (1918 – 2020), NASA mathematician featured in the 2016 movie “Hidden Figures”
- Feb 8-14: Warren Washington (b. 1936), internationally recognized atmospheric scientist
- Feb 15-21 Mae Jemison (b. 1956), astronaut, physician, engineer
- Feb 22-28 John Brooks Slaughter (b. 1935), engineer, National Science Foundation director

“We hope this exhibit will lead to a greater appreciation of African Americans’ contributions to STEM,” said Adam Smith, Exploration Place’s President and CEO. “And that through social media sharing, we can get the message out to as large an audience as possible.”

Denise Sherman, executive director of The Kansas African American Museum, noted that one of the selected honorees, Dr. John Brooks Slaughter, is a Kansas native who was inducted by the museum into the 2021 “A Tribute to Trailblazers Hall of Fame.”

“Our mission is to make the African American experience resonant to every Kansan,” Sherman said. “This outdoor exhibit is a natural partnership between two organizations where education and discovery are key elements to learning. Historically, African Americans have made significant contributions in the field of science, and those contributions continue to shape our society today. It is our hope that the featured African American scientists encourage others to learn more about STEM disciplines.”

About Exploration Place

The mission of Exploration Place, Kansas’ premier science center, is to inspire a deeper interest in science and technology through creative and fun experiences for all. Exploration Place is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and through 8 p.m. on Thursday evenings. For general information, visit www.exploration.org. For more information about the African American scientists, visit www.exploration.org/bhm.