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For Immediate Release

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Maryland Public Television announces launch of national HBCU Week

Initiative includes national broadcasts of HBCU-themed programs and new short films for YouTube, WORLD and PBS online platforms

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Maryland Public Television (MPT) today announced a national expansion of its HBCU Week programming initiative for September in celebration of the contributions of America’s historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). The initiative includes national broadcasts of three HBCU-themed films and the production of four new short films focusing on HBCU Classic football matchups.

“It is critical for all Americans to understand the unique contributions of these extraordinary institutions, and MPT, with our partners, is honored to share their stories with viewers nationwide,” said Travis E. Mitchell, MPT senior vice president and chief content officer, and a graduate of Morgan State University.

Distributed across its TV, social media, and online platforms during each of the last three years, HBCU Week on MPT has featured up to 22 hours of unique content about HBCUs. HBCU Week 2023 on MPT, September 4 - 10, features more than 27 hours of content that chronicles HBCU contributions to science, medicine, history, education, civil rights, the arts, music, sports, and more.

With support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), MPT’s long-standing HBCU Week will grow from a statewide endeavor reaching MPT’s footprint (Maryland, Washington, D.C., and parts of Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia), to a project that reaches nearly all TV households across the country.

“CPB support for this initiative will ensure that all audiences have access to content about historically Black colleges and universities and the vital role they play as institutions of higher learning nurturing generations of diverse leaders,” said Pat Harrison, CPB president and CEO.

MPT is partnering with WORLD to present broadcasts of 30-minute programs on HBCU themes during three consecutive Sundays in September (Sept. 3, 10, and 17) on its national public TV channel. The programs are *Inside the CIAA*, a forthcoming special that explores the impact of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Tournament in Baltimore; *Afro Blue: A Year in the Life*, a behind-the-scenes look at Howard University’s vocal jazz ensemble; and *Sounds of the Game*, an inside look at the culture of HBCU marching bands.

Four new short films will also be released throughout the month on YouTube, the PBS App, and PBS digital platforms. MPT, along with three other PBS stations – Louisiana Public Broadcasting, Howard University Television, and PBS North Carolina – are each producing a film focusing on the HBCU Classic football matchups that are a central part of HBCU culture.

Additionally, these four short films will be presented as a single episode of the WORLD series *Local, USA* and scheduled for national broadcast in February 2024 as part of public media's Black History Month pipeline. *Local, USA* airs content from public TV stations and independent producers that show the depth and diversity of people in fascinating short stories.

Congress defines an HBCU as "any historically Black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans." Today, the 107 HBCUs recognized by the U.S. Department of Education continue to deliver on the promise of their founding, with more than 237,000 students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds currently enrolled, alongside at least one million alumni from all walks of life. HBCUs are among America's most crucial institutions for providing access to higher education for generations of Americans from diverse backgrounds, including some of today's most notable individuals such as U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, Oprah Winfrey, Dr. David Satcher, and many others.

"We thank CPB for its support of this important project and for its commitment to bringing the HBCU story to households across America," added Mitchell. "We hope that alignment of this content with the access provided by our strategic partners, CPB and WORLD, and other PBS stations will help us foster unity through dialogue and inspire additional content opportunities that create access to and for communities of color."

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) affiliate, offering entertaining, informative, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates and distributes local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® Awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.

About The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation authorized by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,500 locally managed and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. CPB is also the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television, and related online services. For more information, visit cpb.org, follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn, and subscribe for other updates.

About WORLD

WORLD shares the best of public media in news, documentaries and programming. WORLD's original series examine the issues and amplify the voices of those often ignored by mainstream media. The multiplatform channel helps audiences understand conflicts, movements and cultures from around the globe. Its original work has won a Peabody Award, an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award, an International Documentary Association Award, a National News and Documentary Emmy Award, two Webby Awards and many others honoring diversity of content and makers. WORLD is carried by 194 member stations in markets representing 77% of US TV households. Funding for WORLD is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. WORLD is produced by GBH in partnership with WNET and is distributed by American Public Television (APT). Find out more at WORLDChannel.org.