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**The MAX celebrates Black History Month with an impressive lineup of events.**

*First Saturday: Celebrating Black Excellence— February 5 at The MAX*

MERIDIAN, Miss. (Jan. 25, 2022) –To celebrate Black History Month, The MAX is honoring three black actresses and activists who hail from Mississippi: Juanita Moore, Beah Richards, and Tonea Stewart. Learn more about these women who exemplify black excellence in their lives and art, February 5 at the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience in downtown Meridian.

Juanita Moore was a film, television, and stage actress born in Greenwood in 1914. She began her career at a time when there were few roles in Hollywood for African Americans, appearing in 50 films from the 1930s–2000. Moore was nominated for an Academy Award and a Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in the 1959 film *Imitation of Life*. Arnett Moore, Juanita’s nephew, will present an illustrated talk on her life and career at 1 p.m. followed by the unveiling of her star on The MAX Walk of Fame.

Tonea Stewart, also from Greenwood, at 2 p.m. will perform *A Black Woman Speaks*, an adaption of a poem written and performed by Beah Richards in 1950. Stewart is a professional actress, director, national museum exhibit director, and former Dean of the College of Visual & Performing Arts at Alabama State University. Her screen and television credits include *A Time to Kill*, *The Rosa Parks Story*, *Mississippi Burning*, and *In the Heat of the Night* television series, just to name a few.

“I think [Beah Richards’] legacy is a responsibility to the rest of us to continue the fight for African Americans and for women.” — Lisa Gay Hamilton, co-star of *The Practice*

Vicksburg native Beah Richards, born in 1920, was a prolific actress. Nominated for a Tony (*The Amen Corner*) and an Oscar (*Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*), Richards won two Emmys for her work in television (*Frank’s Place* and *The Practice*). She was a playwright, poet, and political activist who used prose and performance to address topics of race, gender, and class, including the oppression Black women faced.

Admission to events is free with 1st Saturday discount admission: \$5 for adults, \$1 for ages 6\_17, and free for 5 and under and members. The MAX is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The museum is located at the corner of Sela Ward Parkway and Front Street, overlooking the railroad at the edge of Meridian’s historic downtown. Street parking is available, with shops and restaurants within walking distance. For more information visit [msarts.org](http://msarts.org) or call 601-581-1550.

**About The MAX**

The Mississippi’s Arts + Entertainment Experience explores the state’s creative legacies in one immersive attraction. Come discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world’s arts and entertainment icons – Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Jim Henson, Sela Ward, Margaret Walker, Eudora Welty and Richard Wright, and many others.

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