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LEMOYNE-OWEN KICKS OFF A MONTH-LONG CELEBRATION OF BLACK WOMEN IN AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY

Author and Vanderbilt Professor to share the history of black women and the African diaspora.

MEMPHIS, TN (January 24, 2012) -- This year's national theme for Black History Month is *Black Women in American Culture and History*. Historian, Dr. Tiffany Ruby Patterson will kick off LeMoyne-Owen College's month-long celebration **Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2012, at 11 a.m.** at Metropolitan Baptist Church, 767 Walker Ave.

Dr. Patterson's lecture will focus on the cultural and literary contributions of southern African American women.

Dr. Femi Ajanaku, director of LeMoyne-Owen's Center for African and African American Studies, invited Dr. Patterson to speak. "We look forward to her lecture," Dr. Ajanaku said. "She is an accomplished author, historian, social anthropologist and professor who has significant experience with undergraduate students" she added. "Her work embodies this year's theme of celebrating African American women."

Dr. Patterson is Vanderbilt University's acting director and associate professor of African American and Diaspora Studies, associate professor of American Studies and affiliated faculty for its Department of History. She also is the author of Zora Neale Hurston and a History of Southern Life (Temple University Press), where she uses Hurston's work to take the reader on a journey behind the veil of Black society in the South.

The public is invited to this free event. Dr. Ajanaku says not only will The LeMoyne-Owen College students benefit from Dr. Patterson's presentation, but also the broader community. "The lessons learned from the journey of African American women are universal."

For more information, contact Dr. Femi Ajanaku at (901) 435-1427.

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The American Missionary Association founded The LeMoyne-Owen College in 1862 to educate freedmen and runaway slaves at the Union Army's Camp Shiloh in Shiloh, Tennessee. The school relocated to Memphis a year later, but was destroyed during race riots in 1866. Lincoln Chapel, as the school was then known, was rebuilt and reopened in 1867 with 150 students and six teachers. Lincoln Chapel was renamed LeMoyne Normal and Commercial School in honor of benefactor, physician and abolitionist Dr. Francis Julian LeMoyne and relocated to its current site at 807 Walker Ave in 1914. After more than 50 years of steady growth, LeMoyne merged with Owen College in 1968. Today, The LeMoyne-Owen College has a student body of more than 1,000 students and offers 4-year degrees in five disciplines: Business and Economic Development; Education; Fine Arts and Humanities; Natural and Mathematical Sciences; and, Social and Behavioral and Sciences.