

# JANUARY

# FEBRUARY

IN THE RECORDS OF WEST AFRICAN HISTORY, "GRIOT" (PRONOUNCED GREE-OH) WAS THE HONORED NAME BESTOWED UPON WISE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE STORY TELLERS ENTRUSTED WITH THE TASK OF DOCUMENTING TRIBAL HISTORIES AND GENEALOGIES.

EDITOR: KERRIANA TATUM  
GRAPHIC DESIGN: KERRIANA TATUM



## INSIDE:

MLK DAY  
BLACK HISTORY MONTH KICKOFF  
BEING BLACK AND...  
BSA STEP SHOW  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ERIC THOMAS  
AND MORE...

# THE GRIOT



BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CULTURAL CENTER  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

# THE GRIOT EDITOR MEET THE EDITOR

## *Hello Readers,*

Although Black History month ended February 28th, of course I believe Blackness should be celebrated every day. This year, the Black/African American Cultural Center chose the theme of “Reclamation”, which has meant a lot of different things for folks. People reclaimed aspects of their Blackness, love, relationship, identity, and more this year with powerful displays throughout the month. We felt the power of poetry. We experienced dancers expressing themselves. We wiped tears. I believe that however you decided to Reclaim yourself, it was the right way, and the way you needed.

I am in awe of the growth and understanding I witness from peers every day within the Black/African American Cultural Center and beyond. Being able to compile events and displays of our pride in the Griot means a lot to me. Centering Blackness as a space of possibility and progress through the art of designing is something I never thought I’d be able to do, at least not on a college level. The state of this country does induce a certain anxiety on me, and I know I’m not alone, so being able to bring an absolute positivity to at the Black students and staff who frequent the office is important.

That being said, I had to reclaim some aspects of self-love, and reclaim my boundaries and limits. It’s easy for me to get lost in solving problems, indulging myself in the issues of my community; I’m sure many of you can relate. In a Black space, with so much love and appreciation for Black lives, Black Love, Black Joy, and more, it can get hard to not want to do everything you can to protect and elevate those aspects, even if it means placing unnecessary stress on oneself. No one person has changed the whole world by themselves. We may want to see our communities thrive, free of pain, hurt, systematic struggles. I understand. But on the smallest level of interaction, we can still move forward, just by having progress and change in the back of our minds.

I am grateful to be the Griot editor this year, as I’m constantly seeing how people truly elevate themselves and grow, with new faces in the pages of every publication. All of you make it hard to even remain in dark places. In the spirit of my favorite song from The Internet, “I just hope you know that it gets better with time.”

*-Kerriana*



# Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day



WRITTEN BY KERRIANA TATUM



This year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day started us off right celebrating the Black community in 2019. The day began with service by staff, faculty, students, and community members who wanted to contribute in a good way. Positive notes were written, bags were stuffed with food and hygiene items, and everyone came together to serve in unity. Volunteers ended up compiling 500 bags and 2300 pairs of socks. The MLK March from Old Town to CSU was met with

participation from many who were at the morning's service. Thank you to the many speakers who spoke at the event, including Dr. Tony Frank, Fleurette King, and Michelle Mendoza, who gave inspirational and thoughtful words of progress to a willing audience. The event lifted spirits and honored the hard work and dream of Dr. King, and we will continue to serve the progressive vision that he honored in his lifetime.

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH KICKOFF

WRITTEN BY:  
RONKE ADEBAYO



The 2019 Black History Month Kickoff gave students the opportunity to really reflect on what it was they wanted to reclaim. The theme for this year's Kickoff was "Reclamation", prompting people to think about what they were reclaiming for themselves. The kickoff came together phenomenally with the help of wonderful student performers and live statues that participated. Three live statues entertained guests this year: Mia Adkins who portrayed Alicia Keys, Zion Jones who portrayed Mayora Carter, and Jayla Hodge who portrayed Ida B. Wells. Each of them gave a moving performance that showed how these past and present figures reclaimed a part of themselves in their different fields. This year's kickoff started with a Michaelah Coleman singing a touching song with a visual from J Cole's video "Be Free" in the background. Following this, Miguel McMillan performed the Black National Anthem on the saxophone. There were other phenomenal



performers as well, such as Tricia Alexander who performed a beautiful spoken word piece entitled "God is a Woman.. A Black Woman". Performances also included Brittany Solomon singing "Don't Touch My Hair" by Solange Knowles. Mohammed York and Jaquikeyah Fields danced lyrically and beautifully to "Freedom" by Beyonce. We had another powerful spoken word done by Arrison Stanfield, Michelle Mendoza, and Devin Jones titled "Duality", and finally the kickoff concluded with Brittany and Zelle Moore singing "Glory" by John Legend. The BHM Kickoff signified Reclamation beautifully as people joined in community to celebrate Blackness.





# HIP-HOP PREACHER: ERIC THOMAS

written by: Ally Johnson

Black History Month at Colorado State University is nothing without a keynote speaker, and Dr. Eric Thomas (or E.T.) contributed to this year's theme of Reclamation perfectly. E.T. was very personal with each student he interacted with and overall spoke greatly on how we must first reclaim ourselves and our history before we can reclaim things from other people. He asked his audience what they were reclaiming and was able to motivate people one by one, and more, stating that they have the potential to do great things and that they can change the situation they are in. When discussing how we as students feel as though our professors aren't helping us out where we need it, but then being discouraged from meeting with professors, E.T. stated, "You can't be upset if they don't make you a priority, but you can be upset if you don't make yourself a priority." He was able to remind us that we have come from



kings and queens and defined odds of what we were expected to be and do. We as an entire Black/African-American community have endured so much pain and hurt, yet have always come up from that. "We do difficult, we have ALWAYS done difficult. So when you see difficult, go to it, don't you EVER back off because our ancestors didn't." He overall reminded us to be great because, "When you're platinum, they gotta treat you platinum." Overall, Dr. Eric Thomas was a phenomenal keynote speaker because he was able to relate to the students and motivate us to go out and get it. He told us that we have to do great and be great and nothing less than. He understood our struggles, but also knows that we are capable of greatness. I encourage you all to secure your bag this semester. Do what you need to do - and them some - and be great! In the words of Dr. Eric Thomas... "Pick your spot. Pick your lane. And dominate it."



UNITED WOMEN OF COLOR PRESENTS

# UWC Hair Show



The Annual United Women of Color Hair Show took place on Sunday February 10th, 2019. The show occurred during the coveted Black/African American Cultural Center's Black History month celebrations and also used the same theme, Reclamation. "We will be portrayed in our own authentic and beautiful way," Joyce SaintJour, vice president of UWC said during the event's introduction. The main 3-rounds of competition, Afro-centric, professional, braids and an optional freestyle round, all focused on styles that embrace the diversity and beauty of black hair. The three competing student stylists, Malik Jackson, Sarai Rudolph, and Olivia Dowell all had their own creative twist for each round, giving the judges a serious time when having to select a winner. Narrowly beating his competitors, Malik Jackson was the overall winner in addition to winning the freestyle round.

The hard work from the 2018-2019 executive members, committees, and tireless support from general members are the reason the tradition of the hair show has continued to thrive, with this year's incredible show attracting over 160 members of the CSU and Northern Colorado community. The raffle give away that consisted of goodie bags full of quality hair-care products and tools was a crowd favorite and five attendees walked out with new hair-care merchandise. UWC also uses the hairshow to highlight local artists and brands to arouse a sense of community engagement. Brand representatives were able to sell their clothes and artists were able to offer services and show off their work. The evening was full of laughter, community and celebration. Traditionally underrepresented hair styles were adored throughout the event. "We are claiming our own hair, whether natural, permed, braided or loc'd. We will define our hair, in all its diverse forms, as something of pride, something of glory," SaintJour said.



WRITTEN BY: MARCELA RIDDICK AND JAYLA HODGE

# BRING THE Culture

## ANNUAL BSA STEP SHOW



WRITTEN BY  
AHJINA HOPKINS



The Black Student Alliance Annual Step Show was, as always, spectacular. This year's show was hosted by stand up comedian, Nate Jackson, someone who is no stranger to CSU or the show. The theme of the night was "Bring the Culture" and it began with a short video that presented the origin of strolling and stepping, as this was the first time many people in the audience had been exposed to this type of performance. Before diving into the competition, the L.I.F.E. Step Team opened, followed by a performance by a few members of BSA. The real competition began with entertainment from Pi Lambda Chi Latina

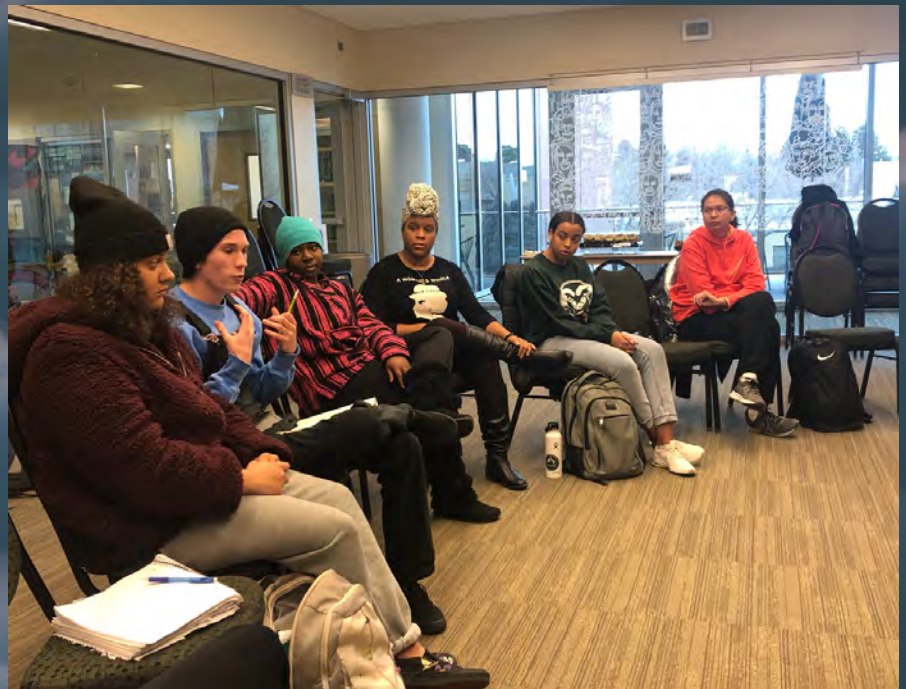
Sorority Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Each organization followed through with their theme of culture; from a taco truck to a Fat Albert tribute, the audience was left wanting more. During intermission, Jackson asked for any children in the audience to come on stage and dance for a \$304 scholarship raised spontaneously by the audience. In the end, Zeta Phi Beta took second place with Pi Lambda Chi claiming first in both the stroll off and step rounds. Congrats to both organizations on their winnings and prize money!



# Being Black And...

written by: Journey Taylor

This year's theme for Black History Month was reclaiming all that we are, and we did just that and more through our "Being Black And..." series. The focus of this group discussion series was the multidimensional aspects of Blackness and how to navigate it. The weekly topics ranged from mental health awareness to New Age activism and more, providing a safe space to discuss the intersectionality of our culture. Participants included students, faculty, staff and even



some campus visitors. Through the course of the different discussions, it seemed as if everyone left with something learned about themselves and others, as well as how to navigate the depth of their identities. We are glad that this series started conversations about controversial topics within the Black community, as well as exploring and reclaiming everything on the spectrum of Blackness.



# dress for success



written by: Ahonsi Ohimai

# NSBE

The National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) held a Dress for Success event on February 4 that included good practices for work attire. Nicolette Peerman, a Senior studying Civil and Environmental Engineering, was the main presenter for the event. Topics discussed during the event ranged from business versus business casual rules and practices, dressing and grooming professionally as people of color, and various scenarios we could find ourselves in our respective professional fields. Included for participants was a question-and-answer portion, where attendees could ask any pressing questions they had or topics that were still unclear to them. Overall, the event was a great experience as students were able to learn some tidbits about professional attire and voice their opinions and concerns.

# FAHRENHEIT



# 451

WRITTEN BY: JAYLEN SPIRES AND KERRIANA TATUM

On February, 27th the B/AACC office hosted a movie viewing and a short discussion of Fahrenheit 451. Fahrenheit 451 is a movie based on a novel by Ray Bradbury, the story of a world in which education of the public through books is made illegal. In the movie, the main character Guy Montag, played by Michael B. Jordan, is a new acclaimed "firefighter" that once started fires to burn hoards of books, then quit once he figured out he was doing harm by essentially deleting knowledge. The B/AACC office led a strong discussion on what thematic morals were shown in the movie and what visual aspects helped the movie be as impacting as it was. This movie and book show that education and knowledge are powerful tools and weapons for people to gain their own self-autonomy, and that there are many institutions set in place that may try to hinder people from obtaining the truth. Joining us with popcorn and pizza was a great way to watch a movie and reflect on what it meant for the students. It was definitely a successful night.





# meet the greeks



written by:  
*Janaye Matthews*

Every February, the National Pan-Hellenic Council at CSU takes the opportunity to participate in Black History Month events by hosting Meet the Greeks. This year's event on February 18th was an opportunity to share some background of historically Black Greek-Letter organizations and their contributions to the Black community. This year was no different; the opportunity to showcase how the Divine Nine presence has continued to grow at CSU's campus proved to be exhilarating for members and non-members. Each organization took time to talk about their history, their

values, and the work they do in Northern Colorado to uphold those values. In addition to CSU's Greek presence of Kappa Alpha Psi, Delta Sigma Theta, Zeta Phi Beta, Omega Psi Phi, and Alpha Kappa Alpha, Phi Beta Sigma was able to come from Greeley and Sigma Gamma Rho was able to come from Denver for their presentations, truly exhibiting the span of the NPHC community across the state. It was wonderful to see the pride members took in sharing about their organization, while remaining grateful to those who were willing to come and engage.



# Finer Womanhood Week



*written by: Kerriana Tatum*

The ladies of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. host Finer Womanhood Week every year, and this year did not disappoint. This year, during the week of February 25--March 2, Zetas started the week off with a panel of professionals who shared post-grad options and professional development, followed by a Dovelly Dance Class the next day, where people showed off their moves and got active through dance. Next, the

principal of scholarship was honored with a study night open to all students. Unfortunately, Saturday's service to clean up a highway in Fort Collins was cancelled due to snow, but it is a project Zetas will be doing later in the semester. Overall, Finer Womanhood Week demonstrated the dedication that Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. has to being in community and continuing to serve.



# Black Love

# LUNCHEON

written by:  
Jaquieyah Fields  
and Kerriana  
Tatum

On February 13th, Black faculty, staff and students at CSU got to gather and be in community with one another over an exquisite meal during the Staff Luncheon. The theme for the luncheon, Black Love, had many ready to explore and discuss what it meant to them. During the luncheon, guests were able to process and have dialogue with many people who contribute to the CSU community. We got to start the event off with a nice icebreaker, simply asking, “what is your favorite love song or movie?”

The discourse of this event led to students Kerriana Tatum and Xavier Hadley performing beautiful spoken word pieces on their experience with their Blackness and how they related to the theme “Black Love”. Each table had a question surrounding the theme Black Love, and every table expressed very intentional and impactful perspectives through different lenses. The luncheon ended with smiles, hugs, community, and good themes for guests to take away with them and apply to their lives.