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The 13th Amendment’s Legacy: Leonard Pitts Jr. to Lead March 23 Panel on Race

As part of the President’s Distinguished Speakers Series, experts from Harvard, Connecticut College and the RWU faculty to join the acclaimed writer during his second visit to the University

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BRISTOL, R.I. – Two and a half years after a visit to Roger Williams University in which he characterized race as “the single dumbest idea in all of history,” Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Leonard Pitts Jr. will return to the University on Monday, March 23, to lead a panel discussion titled “The Modern Legacy of the 13th Amendment and Race Relations in the U.S.”

As part of the President’s Distinguished Speakers Series, the acclaimed Miami Herald columnist – who has worked for nearly four decades as a writer, professor, radio producer and lecturer – will join a panel of experts and commentators from the University and beyond in discussing the 1865 amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery in America, and its impact over the 150 years since its passage.

Other panelists include:

- David Canton – Associate Professor of History, Connecticut College
- Kamille Gентles-Pearl – Associate Professor of Communication, Roger Williams University
- Hume Johnson – Assistant Professor of Communication, Roger Williams University
- Laurence Ralph – Assistant Professor of Anthropology and African and African American Studies, Harvard University

The event is also part of a yearlong series at RWU titled 150 Years Later: The 13th Amendment & Race in America, which calls upon us to both celebrate the monumental legislation to abolish slavery, but also to reflect critically on the current state of race relations in the U.S.

The March 23 discussion will take place at 6:00 p.m. in the School of Law Appellate Courtroom (Room 283) on the University’s Bristol campus at One Old Ferry Road. The event is free and open to the public; no tickets are required. For more information, call (401) 254-3166.
Launched in 2011, the President’s Distinguished Speakers Series at Roger Williams University invites thought leaders from a wide range of disciplines to share perspectives, inspire conversations and enrich the intellectual lives of students, faculty and staff at Roger Williams as well as members of the local community.

As part of the series, each guest is invited to devote much of the daylong visit to direct engagement with students in classroom sessions, offering RWU students unique opportunities for one-on-one interactions with some of the world’s leading authors, scholars, artists and public servants.