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Roger Williams University School of Law

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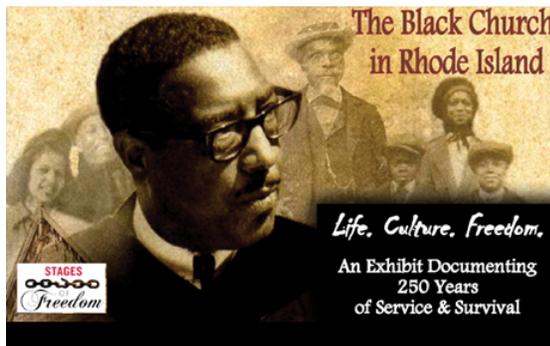
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February 21, 2017

# Newsroom

## Do Lord Remember Me: Black Church in RI

*Joe Wilson Jr., star of Trinity Rep's "The Mountaintop," will deliver 1842 speech by black Anglican priest credited with winning African-American voting rights in RI*



**BRISTOL, R.I., Feb. 15, 2017** – A groundbreaking exhibit titled [“Do Lord Remember Me: The Black Church in Rhode Island”](#) will open at Roger Williams University on Tuesday, Feb. 28, and will feature [a powerful performance by actor Joe Wilson Jr., plus a panel discussion.](#)

**From Feb. 28 through March 6, RWU and RWU Law will host the traveling exhibit in the second-floor atrium of the School of Law building** on the university's Bristol campus. The exhibit will be on display Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Free and open to the public, [the exhibit](#) documents 250 years of service and survival, telling the story in images and text of American firsts: the first black philanthropic organization (the Free African Union Society, founded in Newport); the first black Episcopal delegation to a Diocesan Convention (from Christ Church in Providence); the first piece of sacred music by an African-American (by Newport Gardner); and more.

“Stages of Freedom, with support from the Rhode Island Council on the Humanities, has created a highly visual and educational traveling exhibit that provides a wonderful tool for understanding the power and purpose of the black church in Rhode Island,” said **Ray Rickman, executive director of Stages of Freedom**, the nonprofit that mounted the exhibition traveling around the state. “Roger Williams University

is the first institution to book the exhibit following its 2016 inaugural tour of the state, which attracted well over 1,000 viewers. We hope a large number of people will attend this exciting event.”

**RWU President Donald J. Farish** said, “Our university’s namesake, Roger Williams, is noteworthy not only because he championed religious tolerance but also because he opposed slavery in an era when slavery was commonplace. Hosting events during Black History Month that bring attention to the history of the black church in Rhode Island is, therefore, very much in keeping with the values that guide our institution. In addition to our students and faculty, we hope members of the external community will take advantage of the opportunity to attend.”

During the event, Wilson – a resident artist at the Trinity Repertory Company who just starred in “The Mountaintop,” a play about the last night before the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination – will deliver an 1842 speech by the Rev. Alexander Crummell, a black Anglican priest in Providence credited with winning the right to vote for Rhode Island blacks during the Dorr Rebellion.

**The Feb. 28 event will take place in the RWU School of Law Appellate Courtroom 283** on the university’s Bristol campus, at One Old Ferry Road. The exhibit will open at 4 p.m., and the program will begin at 6 p.m. with Wilson’s performance, followed by a panel discussion and question-and-answer session about the exhibit, “The Black Church in Rhode Island.” **The panel will include Rickman, RWU History Professor Charlotte Carrington-Farmer and the Rev. Sammy C. Vaughan, senior pastor at St. James Baptist Church, in Woonsocket. It is free and open to the public; no tickets are required.** For more information, call (401) 254-3166.

The exhibit is funded by **The Rhode Council for the Humanities** and **The Rhode Island Council on the Arts**, sponsored by **Opera Providence**, and mounted by **Stages of Freedom**, a nonprofit founded by Rickman and program coordinator Robb Dimmick.