

News from



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Freedom Singer to Speak at ABAC February 22

TIFTON – As part of the celebration of African American History Month at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Rutha Harris, legendary civil rights activist and Freedom Singer, will be on campus on Feb. 22 at 3 p.m. in Howard Auditorium. This event is free and open to the public.

A lifelong resident of Albany, Harris joined the Albany Movement and original Freedom Singers traveling over 50,000 miles singing for the cause of freedom and raising funds for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

Harris' professional career began in 1963 when the Freedom Singers signed a recording contract with Mercury Records. She has recorded with the Landmark Gospel Singers, Georgia Mass Choir, and Whitney Houston. She has performed at Carnegie Hall, Radio City Music Hall, the Civic Opera House in Chicago, the United Nations in New York, the Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island, The March on Washington in Washington, D.C., and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The highlight of Harris' professional singing career was being selected to perform as a member of the Georgia Mass Choir in the movie, "The Preacher's Wife," starring Denzel

Washington and Whitney Houston. She attended Albany State College and graduated in 1970. She had further studies at Valdosta State University, Dillard University, and Florida A&M University. In 1998 she organized The Albany Civil Rights Museum (now Institute) Freedom Singers.

In 2004, Harris recorded her first CD titled, "I'm On the Battlefield." In 2010, she performed at the White House in "Performance at The White House: A Celebration of Music from The Civil Rights Movement." Harris was presented with a proclamation by the Atlanta City Council for her valuable contributions to racial equality in 2011.

In 2013, Harris was presented with the National Association for the Study and Performance of African American Music (NASPAAM) Trailblazer Award for outstanding work preserving, promoting and advancing the tradition of African American Music. She also sang at the Inter-Faith Services for the March on Washington celebration held at the Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, DC.

Most recently, Harris was inducted into the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, Inc., at the Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in 2015 and received the Hero Award in History from the Albany Municipal Auditorium Centennial Celebration in 2016.

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