



NEWS RELEASE

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Bradley Museum showcases “Education and Empowerment” Exhibit

MTSU history students celebrate conclusion of Bradley Museum exhibit project

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. — Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center will celebrate an interactive history exhibit recently completed by MTSU graduate students. The new exhibit, “Education and Empowerment: African American Education in Rutherford County,” will be unveiled at a reception celebration from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Friday May 26 at Bradley Academy Museum, 415 S. Academy St., Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Light refreshments will be provided at the free event.

The public event coincides with the Red and Black Holloway Reunion. The Red and Black reunion is a weekend-long celebration for former students who attended the original Holloway High School. The celebration is held every year during the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

“We are excited to share this new exhibit with the Murfreesboro community,” said Vonchelle Stenbridge, Program Coordinator at Bradley for Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Department. “Bradley Academy is a cultural resource that serves as a Rutherford County tourist destination with programming that promotes African American history. We are thankful to MTSU’s Public History Program for partnering with us to tell this history.”

Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center partnered with Dr. Brenden Martin, Director of MTSU’s Public History Program, to develop the interactive exhibit. The new exhibit features two touch screen monitors filled with images of Bradley and Holloway’s history.

The project chronicles how local African American schools served as a beacon of empowerment and activism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The history is told through a first-floor wall display that includes oral histories, photographs and material culture.

Public History students researched, planned and constructed the permanent exhibit as part of the “Essentials of Museum Management” class taught by Dr. Martin of the MTSU Department of History.

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“This kind of class prepares students for the way museums operate with professionals assigned different aspects of the project exhibit,” said Dr. Brenden Martin, Director of MTSU’s Public History Program. “The goal of the project is to assist museums with historical displays while teaching students about the importance of working together as teams.”

The City of Murfreesboro and the Bradley Academy Historical Association, Inc. signed an agreement in 2015 to transfer management and operations of Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center to the City of Murfreesboro. Managing and operating the museum is part of the City Parks and Recreation Department’s preservation and programming mission. Under the agreement, the department manages, operates, and provides programming for the museum facility. The Bradley Board and Association serves as an advisory/friends group with fundraising and providing volunteers for special programs, exhibits and events.

The non-profit Bradley Academy Historical Association, Inc. has long worked to restore the landmark to preserve the history of its contribution to the community. Bradley Academy, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was founded in the early nineteenth-century as a school for white males. Among the earliest students was James Knox Polk, the eleventh president of the United States. From 1884 until the 1960s, it was an elementary and secondary school for African Americans in Rutherford County who struggled to obtain a formal education in the post-Civil War period. The 1917 building is an example of standardized, early-twentieth-century Schoolhouse architecture. In 2017, the structure will be 100 years old.

An hour-long documentary on the Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center produced by CityTV can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/aacz25UhG3I>. For more information about Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center, contact **Vonchelle Stenbridge** at 615-962-8773 or visit www.murfreesborotn.gov/parks. For information on the project. Contact **Dr. Brenden Martin** at 615-898-2643 or Brenden.martin@mtsu.edu.

For City News online, visit www.Murfreesborotn.gov.

Photos attached provided by Jim Davis, Murfreesboro Parks & Recreation Department:

1. *Bradley Academy/Holloway Interactive Exhibit.jpg*
2. *Bradley Exhibit.jpg*
3. *Bradley Photo.jpg*

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