



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## "African American Experience in New York" Exhibit Opens at Medgar Evers College to Celebrate Juneteenth

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY June 15, 2012

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The traveling **African American Experience in New York** exhibit opened this week at Medgar Evers College. The exhibit, which had been on display in the War Room of the State Capitol since February, highlights the themes and people who were honored during Black History Month 2012.

The unveiling of the traveling exhibit is being done in conjunction with Juneteenth celebrations occurring around the State. Juneteenth honors African Americans' heritage and their struggle against slavery and for equal rights. Its origins can be traced back to the end of the Civil War. In September of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that any slave living in one of the Confederate states was considered free. It went into effect in January of 1863. Unfortunately, many slaves, especially those living in the deep-south, were unaware of the Proclamation and the freedom it granted them until Union soldiers occupied those areas during the late spring and early summer of 1865. The last place to be emancipated was Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865. Because of the length of time it took for many slaves to be freed, African American communities today celebrate Emancipation over a number of days, ranging from June 10<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>.

The President of Medgar Evers College, Dr. William Pollard, said, "I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for choosing Medgar Evers College as the first site for the traveling 'African-American Experience in New York' exhibit. The history of the struggle for equality, as told through the life stories of these remarkable men and women, should serve as an inspiration for the students who attend class here. Hopefully, they will discover, through their academic studies, the need to continue that struggle for justice in the same manner and with the same zeal that Medgar Evers showed before his Assassination."

The exhibit will remain at Medgar Evers College through the summer.