

D E S E R T D A N C E T H E A T R E

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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TO ALL MEDIA**

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WHAT: Mississippi Journey: Three Life Experiences (Life Conversations)
 Honor and Duty: The Mississippi Delta Chinese (Documentary Film)
WHEN: Wednesday, June 14, 2017
WHAT TIME: 6:00pm-9:00pm
WHERE: First Congregational United Church of Christ
 1407 North 2nd Street, Phoenix AZ 85004
COST: FREE to the Public ~ RSVP Required by June 13th*

*Please RSVP early for this free event. Seating is limited. Refreshments provided.

Eventbrite RSVP: <http://mississippijourney.eventbrite.com>

FaceBook Event Page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1884069311815190/>

For more information: 480-962-4584, 480-430-8946, Lisa@DesertDanceTheatre.org, <http://desert-dancetheatre.org/mississippi-journey-honor-duty/>

Photos/Promo Flyer available upon request.

MISSISSIPPI JOURNEY

Mississippi Journey: Three Life Experiences is a conversation about the life journey of three Arizona residents with deep roots in the Magnolia state. From very different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, Rev. James Pennington - Pastor at First Congregational United Church of Christ, Lisa Chow - Artistic Director of Desert Dance Theatre and Floyd Alvin Galloway - Owner of AGE2 Management Services will share experiences that they have found in common that have connected them in their life through their journey from Mississippi to Arizona.

Mississippi is a state of many paradoxes, conflicts and puzzles, but also through its struggles molded people of strength and character. The evening will also shed more light on a Chinese American community in the Mississippi Delta through filmmaker and special guest, E. Samantha Cheng - Executive

Producer of Heritage Series, and her documentary, Honor and Duty: The Mississippi Delta Chinese. This will be a lively night to remember and a great learning experience for all.

This project was made possible by a grant from Arizona Humanities, and is sponsored by First Congregational United Church of Christ, AGE2 Management Services, Desert Dance Theatre, Heritage Series, Arizona Informant Newspaper, and Radio Phoenix.

DETAILED PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The evening program is in two-parts. The first part is a open conversation with three individuals who have roots in Mississippi and have migrated to Arizona called, "The Mississippi Journey: Three Life Experiences." Lisa R. Chow, Floyd Alvin Galloway, and Rev. James Pennington talk about their vastly different life experiences surrounding their upbringing in Mississippi including: ethnic culture, religion, socio-economics, philosophies and politics and other influences that shaped their lives to become who they are today. They will also share how they came to reside in Arizona and how they evolved.

Lisa R. Chow was born and raised in Greenville, MS by Chinese immigrant grocery store/restaurant owners. At a very young age, she discovered that she had the passion for the arts in a small town with very limited resources. She grew up living three different lives, 1) with traditional Chinese values, 2) in public and private school that was predominately Caucasian, then 3) worked in the family business that was in a predominately African American neighborhood. She is the Artistic Director of Desert Dance Theatre and President of the Arizona Dance Coalition.

Floyd Alvin Galloway, originally from Rockford, IL, would re-migrate annually to his parents' native Mississippi home. He spent numerous summer months in the sweltering heat of discrimination and America's racial class system. The racial and political climate was as thick as the humidity in the Mississippi Delta area during the 60's civil rights movement. He is owner of AGE2 Management Services and Great Press America Media Relations.

Rev. James B. Pennington was born and raised in Booneville, MS. He moved with family to the South Side of Chicago when he was 11 years old. He grew up as a "Mississippi Sissy" which was wonderfully challenging and helped him to be more resilient and confident of where his life's journey would take him. He is the Senior Pastor at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Phoenix. He is very connected to the downtown Phoenix community focused on his social justice work in immigration and marriage equality.

While coming from totally different backgrounds and upbringing, the speakers will share their stories in hopes to open dialogue and create understanding between the diverse populations of people in the Metro Phoenix areas that may have similar experiences. Our goal is to create a safe environment to discuss issues of race, gender and discrimination, and to help our audience to reflect on their own life experiences and finding ways to embrace the diversity within our Arizona communities. The audience will have a chance to express any concerns or issues during the Q & A after the talks.

The second part of the program is the screening of a documentary called, “Honor and Duty: The Mississippi Delta Chinese.” This three-part documentary series tells the story of an almost forgotten community of Chinese in America's Deep South. This unique story shows how Chinese families built an enduring kinship and friendship through small town markets and grocery stores in the segregated South. It draws in part on the memories of the patriotic Chinese WWII veterans who lived in this area and stepped forward to serve and the families and community that supported them. This documentary is not only about a distinctive community in an unexpected milieu, but is also a microcosm of stories that resonate with many if not all immigrant populations who are drawn to America in hope of making a better life for themselves and their children. It will spark valuable conversations about contemporary immigration policy and practices for ethnic minorities in today’s American landscape.

Info: <https://www.heritageseries.us/honor-and-duty>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/158699377>

After the film screening, there will be a Q & A with film maker, E. Samantha Cheng, who will share her experience, discovery and background while researching and making the film.

E. Samantha Cheng, Executive Producer of the Heritage Series, has written, produced and directed the documentary film, *Honor and Duty: The Mississippi Delta Chinese*. She is a broadcast veteran with years of experience in television production. Her experience as a journalist, documentarian, successful minority small business owner and her passion for raising the visibility of Asian Pacific Islander Americans (APIA) is well known amongst the APIA community. Her multi-media programs center on APIA impact and individual contributions to American history. Her documentary films, *Dalip Singh Saund: His Life, His Legacy* and *Norman Y. Mineta: A Boy from San Jose* center two public servants of Asian Pacific American decent and their contribution to the United States.

Arizona has a diverse ethnic community with similar stories, but different types of experiences. Our goal is to open a discussion about the history of Chinese in America as well as other immigrant populations. We hope this project will be a catalyst for dialogue and discussion amongst the Arizona communities that have not had a chance to express their voice.

This cultural and educational event creates and promotes the opportunity to explore our shared human experiences through discussion, learning and reflection.

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