



Institute on Black Life (IBL)
2025 Annual Conference
Conference theme: Black Joy

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025

USF Marshall Student Center
Rm 3707, Tampa Campus

Reception Performance by Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe
TECO Hall

**RACIAL
JUSTICE
INITIATIVE**



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA
College of Arts & Sciences



CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Black Joy is a powerful lens through which we can understand the full breadth of Black life, identity, and resilience, offering a nuanced view that encompasses both individual and communal experiences of joy. This conference seeks to explore and celebrate the dynamic ways Black individuals and communities cultivate joy in the face of personal and systemic challenges.

Join us as students, scholars, artists, activists, and practitioners engage in thoughtful discussions on how joy functions as an act of resistance, a cultural practice and a source of personal and collective healing. We seek to highlight how expressions of Black joy sustain and nourish our communities, breathing life into Black futures and inspiring strength, creativity and connection both within and beyond our communities.

THANK YOU

On behalf of the Institute on Black Life and the Racial Justice Initiative, thank you for joining us in celebrating Black Joy. Community has been and remains a core value in the practice of Black living, and your presence and participation in this conference has provided the sinew, heartbeat, and breath that facilitates our collective thriving. We invite your continued connection and collaboration with IBL—your creative ideas, your research, and your passions—as we strive to be a bridge between USF and the community.

DR. DAVID PONTON, III

Director, USF Institute on Black Life
Chair, Racial Justice Initiative

DR. WILL TYSON

Associate Director, USF Institute on Black Life



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

- 10:30 A.M. Check-in, Book Expo, Music, Lite Bites & Coffee
- 10:55 A.M. Welcome Address: Dr. David Ponton III
- 11:00 A.M. “The Color of Culture: Celebrating African American Excellence in the Arts!”
Dr. Denise Davis-Cotton
- 11:30 A.M. Address by Dean Elizabeth Spiller
- 11:35 A.M. “Ms. Allyssa Jones and the Black Joy Ensemble”
- 12:15 P.M. Session 1: Black Joy in the Arts
Wisdom Nemi Otikor, Joseph Ambrosino & Dr. Cheryl Rodriguez
- 1:15 P.M. Lunch: MSC 3705 and 3709
Journey Towards Justice documentary screening
Registration is needed to attend lunch
- 2:30 P.M. TWO SESSIONS
MSC 3707: Session 2.1 - Designing a Black Womanist Anthology
Santana Nyanje & Mohammed Sharif Umar

MSC 3709: Session 2.2 - Connecting to Creativity as a Pathway to Black Joy
Helen Joseph
- 3:20 P.M. TWO SESSIONS
MSC 3707: Session 3.1 - Health and Black Joy
Hanan Ibrahim & Kamara Mikel

MSC 3709: Session 3.2: Black Joy in Practice
Andrea Jackson & Alanah Cooper
- 4:05 P.M. MSC 3707: AFA/IBL HIV/AIDS Research Award Recipients
Closing Remarks by Dr. Will Tyson, IBL Associate Director
- 4:30 P.M. TECO HALL
Please join us for a reception and live performance by
Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe: “The Harlem Renaissance”