The College of Education & Human Development and the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence present the 32nd Annual Benjamin E. Mays Lecture.

February 25, 2021
6:30 p.m.

“African Epistemologies: A Transition to a Pan World Academy”
**PROGRAM**

| Welcome | Dr. Brian Williams, Director  
Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence  
College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University |
| University Greetings | Dr. Curtis Byrd, Special Advisor to the Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Office of the Provost, Georgia State University |
| College Greetings | Dr. Paul Alberto, Dean and Regents' Professor  
College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University |
| Introduction | Dr. Joyce King, Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Chair for  
Urban Teaching, Learning and Leadership  
College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University |
| Speaker | Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, Professor and Chair  
Department of Africology and African American Studies  
Temple University |
| Q&A | Facilitated by Dr. Joyce King |
| Closing & Special Presentation | Dr. Brian Williams and the Family of the late Dr. Alonzo A. Crim |

**WELCOME FROM DR. PAUL ALBERTO, DEAN**

On behalf of Georgia State University’s College of Education & Human Development, I’d like to welcome you to the 32nd Annual Benjamin E. Mays Lecture. This lecture series is another example of the commitment our college and our Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence have made to improve education for all students across the metro-Atlanta area.

Today’s event comes as we as a nation strive for important changes to eliminate racism across our institutions. For our part, the College of Education & Human Development is providing opportunities for conversations among students, faculty and staff to light the path forward in ensuring our college is an inclusive and equitable place to work and learn. The 2021 Mays Lecture is one part of that conversation, offering a unique perspective and encouraging us to think through what it means to support urban education today. I look forward to hearing Dr. Asante’s presentation and how his research and scholarship can guide us toward a better urban educational landscape.

**WELCOME FROM DR. BRIAN WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR**

Welcome to the 32nd Annual Benjamin E. Mays Lecture hosted by the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence. For more than a quarter of a century, this event has served as a unique opportunity to celebrate excellence in urban education. The Mays Lecture is a gathering space for the Community of Believers, the group of individuals charged by Dr. Crim to work collaboratively toward the goal of excellence in urban education for all children. As a participant in tonight’s event, I encourage you to take this opportunity to not only learn from our speaker but also connect with other members of the educational community. It is my sincere hope that tonight’s program and the words of Dr. Molefi Asante will inspire you to think in new ways about urban education and the ways in which we might work collectively to better serve our children.
ABOUT THE BENJAMIN E. MAYS LECTURE

“It must be borne in mind that the tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy of life lies in having no goal to reach.” – Benjamin E. Mays

In the spring of 1988, the Benjamin E. Mays Chair of Urban Educational Leadership was approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and established in the former College of Education at Georgia State University. Its goal was and continues to be the improvement of the quality of educational institutions in urban areas of the country, with special emphasis on the problems faced by the leadership of large city school districts.

The founding holder of the Chair, Dr. Alonzo A. Crim, initiated the organization and sponsorship of the annual Benjamin E. Mays Memorial Lecture Series. It began in 1989 with Dr. Charles V. Willie, social scholar at Harvard University, and has continued to this year’s lecturer. By continuing to bring nationally prominent educators to Atlanta, each symposium, conference and lecture encourages the discussion of issues facing urban educational leaders. This program not only honors the memory of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, but also promotes his philosophy of educational excellence for those typically least served by society.

DR. JOYCE KING, BENJAMIN E. MAYS ENDOWED CHAIR FOR URBAN TEACHING, LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

Dr. Joyce E. King holds the Benjamin Mays Endowed Chair in Urban Teaching, Learning and Leadership at Georgia State University. She has served in senior academic affairs and faculty roles at both historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and predominantly white institutions (PWsIs). Dr. King received a doctorate in the social foundations of education and a bachelor's degree in sociology from Stanford. She received Stanford's Graduate School of Education Alumni Excellence in Education Award in 2018. The concepts of “dysconscious racism,” “diaspora literacy” and “heritage knowledge” are among her widely recognized contributions to the field of education. In addition to “Heritage Knowledge in the Curriculum: Retrieving an African Episteme” and her newest book, “We Be Lovin’ Black Children: Learning to Be Literate about the African Diaspora,” her publications include seven other books and numerous refereed articles. She is past president of the American Educational Research Association and a member of the National African American Reparations Commission.

DR. MOLEFI KETE ASANTE, GUEST SPEAKER

Molefi Kete Asante is professor and chair of the Department of Africology and African American Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pa. He is the co-founder of Afrocentricity International and is president of the Molefi Kete Asante Institute for Afrocentric Studies. Asante was a guest professor at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China, and is Professor Extraordinarius at the University of South Africa. He is the founding and current editor of the Journal of Black Studies and was the first director of the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Afro-American Studies in 1969. Asante, often called the most prolific African American scholar, has published 93 books, including his recent titles, “The Perilous Center, or When Will the African Center Hold,” “Radical Insurgencies,” “The History of Africa, 3rd Edition,” “The African American People: A Global History,” “Erasing Racism: The Survival of the American Nation;”, “Revolutionary Pedagogy,” “African American History: A Journey of Liberation,” “African Pyramids of Knowledge,” “Facing South to Africa” and “As I Run Toward Africa.” Asante has published more than 500 articles and is considered one of the most quoted living African authors and one of the most distinguished thinkers in the African world. He has been recognized as one of the 10 most widely cited African scholars and one of the most influential leaders in education. He has been named a History Maker with an
interview archived in the Library of Congress. In 2019, the National Communication Association named him an NCA Distinguished Scholar, its highest honor, saying his writings were “spectacular and profound.” He received his Ph.D. from UCLA at age 26 and was appointed a full professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo at age 30. At Temple University, he created the first Ph.D. program in African American Studies in 1988. He has directed more than 140 Ph.D. dissertations, making him the top producer of doctorates among African American scholars. Asante is the founder of the theory of Afrocentricity.

ABOUT THE ALONZO A. CRIM CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence was created in 1996 to create a city-wide laboratory in Atlanta for the development of excellence in urban education. Initially housed in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, the center was also created to extend the research that showed educational excellence was possible in urban settings, despite low family income levels or difficult community problems. Because it is in the heart of Atlanta’s inner city, Georgia State University had the unique ability and responsibility to apply its diverse resources toward the solution of urban educational problems, to develop a national voice on pressing educational concerns and to be a viable academic option for students who were increasingly interested in learning about and addressing urban issues. In 2000, upon his death, the center was renamed after its first Mays chair holder, Dr. Alonzo A. Crim.

The center, housed in the College of Education & Human Development, works in partnership with other universities, school systems, parents, students, social agencies and community organizations to create and sustain excellence in urban educational environments. Its mission, guided by the legacies of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays and Dr. Alonzo A. Crim, is to optimize the life opportunities of children and families in urban communities by ensuring the availability of a prosperous and equitable school environment.

NEXT UP: SOURCES CONFERENCE 2021

The Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence will host the 16th Annual Sources of Urban Educational Excellence Conference in October 2021 with pre-conference events happening the week before the conference. The Sources Conference brings together educators, graduate students, activists, policy makers, artists, business and industry members, and community workers for a series of panels, presentations and discussions around creating excellent learning spaces and opportunities for all students. Explore the Sources Conferences website to see recordings of last year’s conference presentations and find 2021 conference updates: crim.education.gsu.edu/2020-sources-conference.

SUPPORT FOR THE 32ND ANNUAL MAYS LECTURE

The Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence’s success is made possible through the generosity of our Community of Believers. If you would like to support the center’s work, please make a donation at bit.ly/SupportTheCrimCenter.