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February 19, 2001

For Immediate Release:

MISS BLACK EIU 2001 PAGEANT SET FOR FEB. 24

CHARLESTON – Eastern Illinois University's annual Miss Black EIU Pageant will take place at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union's Grand Ballroom.

This year's pageant, with the theme, "Women of Royalty: Past and Present," will feature various entertainers. It also marks the end of the reign of Rashida Garrett, a senior elementary education major from Bellwood, who was named Miss Black EIU 2000 and who coordinated this year's event.

Tickets are available from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. through Friday, Feb. 23, at the University Union box office. Tickets are \$6 in advance, \$8 at the door, and \$5 in advance for groups of 10 or more. For group tickets and/or information, persons should go to Eastern's Student Life Office, University Union Room 316, or call (217) 581-3829.

Contestants for the title of Miss Black EIU 2001 are as follows:

- **LaTacia Land**, a sophomore English major from Chicago and daughter of Karen Land of Chicago. She is a 1999 graduate of Morgan Park High School, Chicago.

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- **Chyna Roundtree**, a freshman psychology major from Calumet City and daughter of Donna Roundtree of Calumet City. She is a 2000 graduate of Thornwood High School, South Holland.
- **Ashonda Simmons**, a junior African-American studies/mathematics major from Chicago. She is the daughter of Sandra Simmons of Chicago and the mother of Jeron Starks. She is a 1998 graduate of Holy Trinity High School, Chicago.

All three contestants will be judged in creative expression, talent, African garment and evening gown competitions, as well as their response to an impromptu question.

Since its inception in 1971, the Miss Black EIU Pageant has become one of Eastern's largest cultural events, paying tribute to African-American women at EIU while instilling a sense of pride, appreciation and cultural awareness in their heritage.

Contestants compete for scholarships, prizes and special awards, in addition to special recognition awards for Miss Congeniality, Miss Togetherness, Miss Enterprise, Miss Ebony and Miss Scholarship.

The public also is invited to attend the Miss Black EIU Coronation Dance, to be held in the University Ballroom immediately following the pageant. Admission is free with the purchase of a pageant ticket or \$5 at the door.