

2-18-1997

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Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "02/18/1997 - Miss Black Pageant This Weekend.pdf" (1997). 1997. 60.
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97-51

February 18, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MISS BLACK EIU PAGEANT THIS WEEKEND

CHARLESTON -- In celebration of African American Heritage month, Eastern Illinois University's Black Student Union is sponsoring the 21st annual Miss Black EIU pageant at 7 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 22 in the Grand Ballroom of the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union.

The Miss Black EIU pageant promotes cultural awareness among Eastern students and provides young African American women the opportunity to showcase their talents and voice their opinions on subjects concerning the African American community as a whole, said Shalanda Hedrick, public relations chair for the pageant.

The mistress and master of ceremonies for this year's pageant are James Robinson of Chicago and Renita Craig of Matteson. The pageant features entertainment by the EIU Dancers and the dance troupe Instrument of Praise, whose members will perform a dramatic interpretation titled "Phenomenal Change" written by Maya Angelou and performed by Rebecca Jones of Chicago. Willie Harris III of Robbins will sing a special tribute to the contestants and Scott Wright of Kansas will accompany him on

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the Grand piano.

This year's pageant theme is "Embracing the Legacy, Expressions of Elegance and Excellence." Four African American women from the Chicagoland area who have demonstrated successfully the continued legacy of elegance and excellence portrayed by past contestants and queens are vying for the title. They are Angela Grimes, a senior speech communication major; Sheniece Harris, a junior speech communication and journalism major; Michelle Johnson, a senior business administrative information systems major; and Tawanda Lawrence, a junior music education major.

Contestants will compete for prizes and awards in the following categories: African garment, creative expression, talent, evening gown and impromptu questioning.

"These four beautiful and talented women have worked hard to make this year's pageant one of uniqueness and elegance. Everyone is encouraged to attend and show their support for these women and the Black Student Union," Hedrick said.

Tickets are \$6 in advance and \$8 at the door and can be purchased at the University Union Ticket Office through Friday, Feb. 21. Hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday.

For more information, call the Student Life Office at 581-3829.