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## Freedom Day Event Juneteenth Celebration--Commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation--

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Freedom Day Event

**Juneteenth Celebration--Commemorating the  
Emancipation Proclamation--Slated for IWU's Quad**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--The fifth annual Bloomington-Normal Juneteenth celebration will be held on Illinois Wesleyan's Quad Saturday, June 21 from 2-7 p.m. Juneteenth, "A Family Affair," marks the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves during the Civil War.

Rev. John Rayford, associate pastor, Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, will deliver the keynote address at 3:30 p.m. on the stage in front of Sheean Library.

The celebration will include gospel music choirs, black history displays, and other activities. Celebrants are encouraged to bring picnic lunches to the Quad. More than 50 vendors will selling food, t-shirts and other items.

Juneteenth is sponsored by the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project, McLean County Historical Society, and IWU. It is free and open to the public.

Juneteenth--or Freedom Day--was created by newly freed slaves to celebrate the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued after the Union victory at Antietam in 1862 and took effect Jan. 1, 1863. The proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln, applied only to slaves in territory controlled by the Confederacy. It did not apply to areas under Union control or to the four slaves states which did not secede from the Union--Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri.

Juneteenth was celebrated at different times throughout the South for two reasons: First, slaves were not freed until Confederate strongholds were overtaken by the Union forces, and second, word of liberation reached slave populations at different times.

The term "Juneteenth," is believed to be a shortened version of the date June 19, when the day was first recognized by former slaves in East Texas. June 19 also is the day of the celebration in southwest Arkansas, California,

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## **Juneteenth Celebration/2**

Louisiana, and Oklahoma. The day is celebrated on Jan. 1 in Alabama, Massachusetts, Georgia, Maryland, New York City, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. In other places, Juneteenth is celebrated on Feb. 1, May 8, May 20, Aug. 1, Aug. 8 and Sept. 22.

Juneteenth, an unofficial holiday long celebrated in the South, has in recent years been marked in communities nationwide with festivities focusing on local history, family life, and African-American culture.