

# Press Releases: Special Program: African American Pioneer Diplomats, Ebenezer Bassett and Frederick Douglass

Notice to the Press  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 13, 2018

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In recognition of African American History Month and the bicentennial of Frederick Douglass's birth, the United States Diplomacy Center is hosting a panel discussion highlighting the diplomatic careers of two prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century African Americans who served as U.S. ministers to Haiti. Ebenezer Bassett was the country's first African American diplomat, and Frederick Douglass was an abolitionist, writer, activist, civil servant, and diplomat. Christopher Teal, a U.S. Foreign Service Officer and author of *Hero of Hispaniola: America's First Black Diplomat, Ebenezer D. Bassett*, will discuss his current project, a documentary on Bassett, after screening a clip from his upcoming film. Dr. Ka'mal McClarin, Curator at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, National Park Service, will lend insight into Douglass's little-known diplomatic career. Several artifacts belonging to Douglass during his time in Haiti will be on display.

The event will take place at noon on Wednesday, February 14, 2018, at the United States Diplomacy Center located at the State Department's 21<sup>st</sup> Street entrance.

When fully completed, the Center will be a 40,000 square foot, state-of-the-art museum and education center dedicated to telling the story of American diplomacy. Visitors will explore the role of diplomacy through interactive exhibits, compelling artifacts, hands-on education programs, and diplomacy simulation programs.

*The event is open to the press. Pre-set time for cameras is 11:15 a.m. from the 21st Street entrance. Final access time for writers and stills is 11:30 a.m. from the 21<sup>st</sup> Street entrance.*

*Media representatives may attend this event upon presentation of one of the following: (1) a U.S. Government-issued photo media credential (e.g.,*

*Department of State, White House, Congress, Department of Defense or Foreign Press Center), or (2) an official photo identification card issued by their news organization, or (3) a letter from their employer on official letterhead verifying their current employment as a journalist.*

*Additionally, they must present an official government photo identification card (i.e., U.S. driver's license or passport).*

For further information, please contact Mary Fanous at [fanousmk@state.gov](mailto:fanousmk@state.gov), or Phone 202-472-8215, or visit <https://diplomacy.state.gov/> or @diplomacycenter on Twitter using the hashtag #DiscoverDiplomacy.

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