

Professor, author, media professional Melissa Harris-Perry to give keynote address at MLK Jr. Regional Celebration



MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY

Saginaw Valley State University has announced the speaker for the 15th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Celebration, which will be held at SVSU on Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024, at 7 p.m. Award-winning author, sought-after public speaker and accomplished media professional Melissa Harris-Perry will join retired Saginaw Public Schools educator and active community volunteer Kermit Anderson Diggs for a fireside chat in the Malcolm Field Theatre for Performing arts in SVSU's Curtiss Hall. The Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Celebration is a collaboration of SVSU and the Bay Area, Midland Area and Saginaw community foundations.

Harris-Perry is the Maya Angelou Presidential Chair in the Department of Politics and International Affairs and the Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality at Wake Forest University. Her areas of expertise encompass various facets of politics as well as public opinion and re-

ligion.

Harris-Perry was the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in political science from Duke University. She has served on the faculties of some of the country's most prestigious institutions. In 2012, Harris-Perry founded the Anna Julia Cooper Center, whose mission was to advance justice through intersectional scholarship, engaged teaching and intentional action. She continues to serve as president of the AJC Center.

Harris-Perry is the author of "Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought" — which won the 2005 W. E. B. Du Bois Book Award from the National Conference of Black Political Scientists — and "Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America." She has also been published in scholarly journals and magazines.

Harris-Perry served as the final host and managing editor of "The Takeaway," a daily, national public radio program and

podcast that ended earlier this year. She also co-created and co-hosted, with Dorian Warren, "Deep Dives," a special project of "The Takeaway." From 2012-2016, Harris-Perry hosted the television show Melissa Harris-Perry on MSNBC.

Harris-Perry earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Wake Forest University and a Ph.D. in political science from Duke University.

In addition to the address by Harris-Perry, the Jan. 17 program will include the presentation of regional scholarship awards by the Bay Area, Midland Area and Saginaw community foundations to high school seniors who have embodied Martin Luther King Jr.'s ideals. Officials also will announce the winners of the Drum Major Awards, which recognize members of the Great Lakes Bay Region who advance King's vision through their community involvement. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Celebration is free and open to the public, but registration is requested.