

Celebrating the 39th year of the
ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH

BLUES SERIES 2026



RECIPIENT OF THE BLUES FOUNDATION'S KEEPING THE BLUES ALIVE AWARD 2009

Monroe County's 39th Annual Black History Month Blues Series is presented by the Monroe County Library System, Monroe County Community College, and the 2026 Blues Coalition of community partners:

La-Z-Boy Foundation, Friends of Bedford, Friends of Carleton, Friends of Dorsch, Friends of Ellis, Friends of Ida, and Friends of South Rockwood.



FRIENDS OF BEDFORD, CARLETON,
DORSCH, ELLIS, IDA & SOUTH ROCKWOOD



MARK "MR. B" BRAUN - JANUARY 27, 2026

Ellis Library & Reference Center – 7:00 pm

Ann Arbor piano master Mr. B opens the branch concert series with a sampling of blues and boogie-woogie. Mr. B is known internationally for preserving the tradition of the blues, especially old-time boogie-woogie style, as an essential form of American music.

3700 S. Custer Road, Monroe, MI

GWENYTH HAYES - Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Bedford Branch Library – 7:00 pm

Bassist and vocalist Gwenyth Hayes leads her band with a modern approach to original compositions as well as blues standards and popular soul, jazz and rock.

8575 Jackman Road, Temperance, MI



REGGIE HARRIS AND MATT WATROBA

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 - Ida Branch Library – 7:00 pm

Reggie and Matt perform inspirational songs from the folk and gospel traditions that provided a soundtrack to the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Through songs and stories of the era, they explore the themes of possibility and hope that continue to resonate. 3016 Lewis Avenue, Ida, MI

JOHNNY RAWLS - Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Carleton Branch Library – 7:00 pm

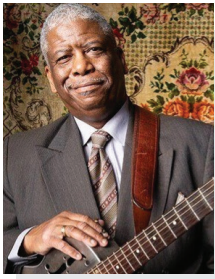
"Soul Blues" best describes the music of Mississippi-born Johnny Rawls. With a career spanning 50 years, Johnny's music goes back to the gospel-derived deep soul style. 1444 Kent Street, Carleton, MI



Hey! We're JUST GETTING STARTED! There's more on the FLIP SIDE...

For more information on Monroe County's 39th Annual Black History Month Blues Series, visit mymcls.com/blues

THE 39TH YEAR OF THE ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH BLUES CONCERT



ROBERT JONES AND CHRIS CANAS - Tuesday, February 24, 2026 **South Rockwood Branch Library – 7:00 pm**

Traditional meets contemporary in the first-ever pairing of blues series favorites Robert Jones and Chris Canas. Their collaboration on classic and modern blues will reveal new ways of interpreting the roots of American music.

5676 Carleton Rockwood Road, S. Rockwood, MI

The Big Gig!

Saturday, February 28, 2026 - Monroe County **Community College La-Z-Boy Center, Meyer Theater - 7:00 pm**

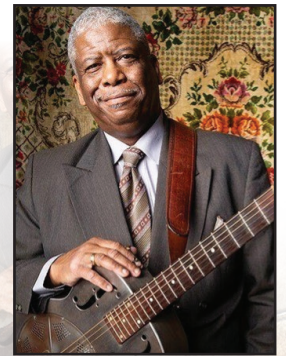
The BIG GIG! Monroe County's 39th Annual Black History Month Blues Concert featuring the legendary Blind Boys of Alabama. Robert B. Jones and the Jones Family open the show.

Celebrate Black History Month and "the roots of all American music" with Monroe County's award-winning annual blues music concert *The Big Gig!* This year's show is all about the connection between gospel and the blues.

Rev. Robert B. Jones serves as the master of ceremonies and opens the night alongside the Jones Family. Headlining the program is the **Blind Boys of Alabama**, the acclaimed living legends of gospel music.

Seating for the Big Gig is general admission, first-come, first-served until the Meyer Theater capacity is reached. Doors to the theater open at 6:00 pm.

– 1555 S. Raisinville Road in Monroe, MI




MONROE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
enriching lives



SHARRIE WILLIAMS - Tuesday, March 3, 2026 **Dorsch Memorial Branch Library – 7:00 pm**

International blues and gospel singer Sharrie Williams presents a unique style she calls "Rockin' Gospel Blues." Sharrie sings in the tradition of the great blues women singers like Koko Taylor and Etta James.

18 East First Street, Monroe, MI

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