

BEREA COLLEGE CONVOCATIONS

PRESENTS

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL CONVOCATION

# OPEN SESAME

*The Black Preacher &  
The Black Puppeteer*

**January 17, 2022  
3:00 p.m.**

*A Livestreamed Event*  
[www.berea.edu/iss/live](http://www.berea.edu/iss/live)

*Chris T. Hayes, '06*



## ABOUT TODAY'S SPEAKER

CHRIS T. HAYES '06

Actor, writer and puppeteer **Chris Thomas Hayes '06** returns to his alma mater today to talk about his continuous path to performing on television and film, what led to him becoming a *Sesame Street* Muppet performer, and the choices that influenced and aided him along the way. He also discusses walking in the footsteps of his grandfather, civil rights activist Reverend King Thomas Hayes Jr. (who always preached the power and joy of education) and carrying on the legacy of service he started.

Chris spent his freshman year at the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music, but soon discovered that the cost of higher education was simply too high, even with the scholarships he had earned and the wages earned from his part-time jobs.

Believing in the worth of his art, Chris searched for another way and discovered Berea College, where he studied in the Department of Theatre. After graduating in 2006, Chris toured the nation with Cincinnati, Ohio's Macap Puppets for three years, performing for family and adult audiences. Since then, he relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, got an agent, and auditioned for dozens of commercials, television show and films, landing parts in several of them. He also began performing improv and stand-up professionally, and worked at the Center of Puppetry Arts. After several years of working and performing, Chris was invited to participate in a *Sesame Street* workshop in New York City, which led to work on the show.

Chris resides in Atlanta with his wife, Greta (herself a 2010 Berea alum), and their son.

*Co-sponsored with the Black Cultural Center, the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education, African & African American Studies, the Campus Christian Center and the Office of the President.*