



## THE PENNINGTON SCHOOL

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**PENNINGTON, N.J., March 28, 2025—The Pennington School Presents *The Long Ride Home: Black Cowboys in America*, an Exhibition of Award-Winning Photojournalist Ron Tarver’s Work**

Beginning March 26 and running through June 6, The Pennington School’s Silva Gallery of Art will host an exhibition entitled, *The Long Ride Home: Black Cowboys in America*. The stunning exhibition is the work of acclaimed photographer Ron Tarver, who will also host a gallery talk and book signing on Tuesday, April 15, from 2:00 until 4:30 p.m.

Tarver, who is an art professor at Swarthmore College, corrects the American cowboy narrative with the publication of his work. From ranches to city streets, his photographs reveal the beauty, romance, and visual poetry of Black cowboys throughout the country.

In his book, Tarver illuminates the enduring heritage of Black cowboys through 110 photos made in the early '90s, at the start of this ongoing, thirty-year project, and includes a comprehensive essay by Art T. Burton, a distinguished historian, author, and expert on Black cowboys. Pictured are cowboys and cowgirls of all ages, Black-owned ranches and rodeo operations, parades, urban cowboys, and retired cowhands. Twenty of these photos will be on display during the gallery show.

Tarver, a Pulitzer Prize-, Pew Fellowship-, and Guggenheim Fellowship-winning photographer, is a natural pioneer of the subject. While Tarver was growing up in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, Black cowboys were an ordinary part of his life; he rode horses, went to rodeos, and spent summer days on his cousin's ranch or working on local farms. His grandfather, Thomas Wilson, was a working cowboy in the 1940s. His father, Richard, was an avid photographer who documented the local Black community, teaching Tarver how to do the same.

When Tarver moved to Philadelphia in 1983, he was surprised by how uninformed people were about Black cowboys. The revelation spurred his dedication to photographing Black cowboys, including while on assignments for *National Geographic* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Tarver’s work is a well-timed complement to the other trailblazers—Beyonce (*Cowboy Carter*), Jordan Peele (*Nope*), Idris Elba (*Concrete Cowboy*), and Lil Nas X (*Old Town Road*)—who are bringing wider recognition to Black cowboys and the vital role they have played in American history and contemporary culture.

The Pennington School is an independent coeducational school for students in grades 6 through 12, in both day and boarding programs. The curriculum is college preparatory, with an emphasis on individual excellence, fostering the development of the whole student through academics, athletics, community service, and the creative and performing arts.

Images: Ron Tarver, *Barrel Racer* (Oakland, CA) 1993; Artist’s headshot