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## 14th National Black Writers Conference

A Program of the Center for Black Literature

At Medgar Evers College

### Sponsorship Packet

The Fourteenth National Black Writers Conference (NBWC) is a major program hosted by the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, CUNY. The Conference will be held at Medgar Evers College, from Thursday, March 22, to Sunday, March 25, 2018. Award-winning writers Colson Whitehead, Kwame Dawes, David Levering Lewis, Susan L. Taylor, and speculative fiction writers Steven Barnes and Tananarive Due are 2018 National Black Writers Conference Honorees. More than 70 writers, publishers, and literary professionals will participate in the Conference over the four days.

Initially inspired by the late John Oliver Killens, the Conference has been held at Medgar Evers College since 1986. Honorees have included Toni Morrison, Derek Walcott, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks, August Wilson, Rita Dove, Edwidge Danticat, Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, Ishmael Reed, Quincy Troupe, Walter Mosely, Dr. Myrlie Evers-Williams, Randall Robinson, Kwame Brathwaite, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o among others. Each subsequent Conference has built on the previous one, attracting a national and international audience. C-SPAN Book TV, national and local television programs, and radio shows have covered the Conference. The Conference has also been heavily promoted on the Internet and has been covered in the New York Times, *Poets & Writers* magazine, and local newspapers and publications. It is also widely promoted throughout the CUNY educational system. Proceedings of six conferences have been published. Publishers have included Morton Books (2010 and 2008), Third World Press (2006), Peter Lang (1996 and 1998), and the Center for Black Literature (2003).

### **National Black Writers Conference Target Population**

The target population for the Conference is an intergenerational and diverse audience comprised of the general public, adolescents, academics, and professionals and stakeholders in the publishing industry for the Conference. About 1,500 people will attend Conference activities over the four days.

Most Conference participants come from the tristate area; however, they also come from states such as Atlanta, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia; and from countries in the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa.

### **2018 NBWC Conference Theme**

The Fourteenth NBWC theme “A Gathering at the Waters: Healing, Legacy and Activism in Black Literature” acknowledges our concern about the recent, and still continued, issues of social inequality and injustices that challenge us and builds on the legacy of healing through activism. This timely theme focuses on the ways in which Black writers use their writing to explore and convey messages that heal and restore themselves and the collective community. The Conference will also examine the significance of activism in writers’ works, that is how a writer’s beliefs and personal vigorous action are used to support the political and social change they want to see take place in today’s society and in the world. The intent of the Conference will be to create “community conversations,” that is public spaces that will expand conversations on healing, race, resistance and activism. Through panel discussions, roundtables, readings, films and workshops, writers, scholars, literary professionals and the general public will gather over four days to discuss these themes.

### **2018 NBWC Program**

#### **Thursday, March 22, 2018, Day One**

Presentation of Papers: The Legacy of Healing and Activism in the Literature of Black Writers

Workshops: Fiction, Poetry, Memoir, Book Publishing

Elders Writers Workshop Reading

Poetry Cafe

#### **Friday, March 23, 2018, Day Two**

**10:00 am to 12:00 – Film: BaddDDD Sonia Sanchez: A Documentary Film**  
By Barbara Attie, Janet Goldwater, and Sabrina Schmidt Gordon

Sonia Sanchez, poet, activist and pioneer, emerged as a seminal figure in the 1960s Black Arts Movement, raising her voice in the name of Black culture, civil rights, women’s liberation, and peace as a poet, playwright, teacher, activist and early champion of the spoken word.

**12:00 pm to 12:30 pm – Film Talkback**

Filmmakers Sabrina Schmidt Gordon and Janet Goldwater, Moderated by Brenda Greene

**1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Panel Discussion**

**The Black Arts Movement: A Foundation for a Legacy of Resistance and Activism**

Panelists: John Bracey Jr., Sonia Sanchez, and James Smethurst  
The Black Arts Movement represents an electrifying period in American letters. The scholars on this panel have edited *SOS—Calling All Black People*, works of fiction, poetry, and drama in addition to critical writings on issues of politics, aesthetics, and gender.

**3:15 pm to 4:45 pm — Roundtable Discussion: Race, Politics, and the Power of the Hip-Hop and the Black Lives Matter Movements**

Panelists: Brittany Cooper, Robin D.G. Kelley, Marcyliena Morgan, David Kirkland, and James Peterson

Panelists will explore the following questions: How do hip-hop culture and the Black Lives Matter Movement provide a means to explore activism and resistance in the literature of Black writers? How did hip-hop culture lay the foundation for the Black Lives Matter Movement? How have representations of race, ethnicity, resistance, and activism in the Black literary tradition evolved and shifted during the Hip-Hop and Black Lives Matter Movements?

**5:00 pm to 6:00 pm — Readings**

Sonia Sanchez, internationally known poet, scholar, playwright  
Jessica Care moore, CEO of Moore Black Press, Executive Producer of Black WOMEN Rock!

**6:00 pm to 7:30 pm — Roundtable Discussion:** A Conversation with writers Victor LaValle, *The Ballad of Black Tom*; Breena Clarke, *Angels Make Their Hope Here*; Darryl Pinckney, *Black Deutschland: A Novel*; and Diane McKinney-Whetstone, *Lazaretto: A Novel*.

**7:00 pm to 9:00 pm — Poetry Café and Slam**

**Saturday, March 24, 2018, Day Three**

**10:00 am to 12:00 — Film: Spirits of Rebellion: Black Cinema from UCLA**

Directed by Zeinabu Irene Davis

This documentary by Zeinabu Irene Davis provides intimate access to several filmmakers identified with L.A. Rebellion, including Charles Burnett, Ben Caldwell, Julie Dash, Haile Gerima, Barbara McCullough, Billy Woodberry and Davis herself, at work and in discussion. The film's topics include the origins of the name "L.A. Rebellion," the importance of public education to this group and in today's world, and the intriguing question, "what is a Black film?"

**12:00 pm to 12:30 pm — Film Talkback**

Zeinabu Irene Davis is a director and producer who has received acclaim for her representation of the African-American female perspective through a variety of works, which include documentaries, short narratives and experimental films.

**10:00 am to 12:30 pm**

**Writers Workshops: Fiction, Poetry, Memoir, Book Publishing**

**1:00 pm to 2:30 pm — Roundtable Discussion: Race, Power, and Politics**

Panelists \*Marc Lamont Hill, Farai Chideya, Imani Perry, Margo Jefferson

The interrelationship between race, power, and politics is more intricate than it has ever been. The panelists will explore the following questions: Is the country more racially divided or less racially divided than it was 15 or 20 years ago? What has been the impact of race, power, and politics in our national discourse and on political and social movements? How are the intersections of race and politics represented in Black literary texts? What is the future of race relations in American society? What role can the public play in shaping race relations?

**3:00 pm to 4:30 pm — Discussion: Black Writers on Race, Resistance and Activism**

Jelani Cobb in conversation with Gloria J. Browne-Marshall

William Jelani Cobb is Professor of Journalism at the Columbia School of Journalism. He has contributed to *The New Yorker* since 2012, and became a staff writer in 2015. He is the recipient of the 2015 Sidney Hillman Award for Opinion and Analysis writing and writes frequently about race, politics,

history, and culture. Cobb is the author of *The Substance of Hope: Barack Obama and the Paradox of Progress* as well as *To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic*. His articles and essays have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *The New Republic*, *Essence*, *Vibe*, *The Progressive*, and *TheRoot.com*.

Gloria J. Browne-Marshall is a playwright and writer of books and essays on justice denied and reclaimed. She is an Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at John Jay College in New York City where she is a member of the Gender Studies faculty.

**5:00 pm to 7:00 pm — National Black Writers Conference Award Program**

**7:00 pm to 9:00 pm — Reception**

**Sunday, March 31, 2018, Day Four**

**11:00 am to 1:30 pm**

**Writers Workshops: Poetry, Fiction, Memoir, Book Publishing**

**2:00 pm to 4:00 pm — Roundtable: The State of Publishing for Black Writers**

\*Troy Johnson, Linda A. Duggins, Dawn Davis, Chris Jackson, Regina Brooks

The publishing world is in the midst of a major transition. Writers, like musicians, are faced with seeking alternative and creative ways of publishing and promoting their books. Black literary agents, editors publicists, writers, and publishers discuss the challenges of publishing in a technology driven age. These topics include online publishing, blogging, distribution, marketing, and e-books. Questions explored are: How do publishers impact and influence the kind of literary texts that are produced by Black writers? How do the Internet, digital publishing, and e-books impact the publishing of literature produced by Black writers?

### **Sponsorship Opportunities**

Sponsorship for the Conference will support the **National Black Writers Conference** and educational and literary programs presented by the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, CUNY. These educational and literary programs focus on the ways in which the literary arts and cultural values inform and influence the work of Black writers and the culture at large; serve as a vehicle for nurturing and cultivating the critical reading and

writing habits of a cross-generation of readers and writers; and demonstrate the Center’s commitment to nurturing and supporting emerging writers.

The programs include:

- The National Black Writers Conference and Symposium
- Re-Envisioning Our Lives through Literature Educational Program
- Elders Writing Workshop
- John Oliver Killens Reading Series
- North Country Institute and Retreat for Writers of Color
- *Writers on Writing* radio program
- *Killens Review of Arts & Letters* literary journal

<b>Sponsor a Panel: \$3,000</b> Sponsor a particular panel for the Conference; name of individual or organization will be listed as a sponsor.	Covers the following costs: Participant honoraria, panel programming, workshops, author readings
<b>Congratulatory/Classified Ad: \$50 – \$800</b> (see descriptions below and on following page)	Covers the following costs: Printing—program journal, posters, brochures
<b>Media Sponsor: \$2,000</b>	Covers the following costs: Public Relations and publicity: TV, print, radio, and Internet
<b>Benefit/Awards Presentation/Reception: \$3,000</b>	Covers the following costs: Catering, performance artists
<b>Awards/Scholarships: \$250 – \$1,000</b>	Covers the following costs: Student Literary Awards and Student Book Scholarships

**Sponsorship Levels**

<b><u>John Oliver Killens</u></b> <b>Platinum Package</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>	<b><u>Gwendolyn Brooks</u></b> <b>Jubilee Package</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>
<b>Benefits</b> Full-page Ad in NBWC Commemorative Program 10 entries to NBWC & Benefit Banquet (1 table) Banner at NBWC Mention on all collateral material once agreement		<b>Benefits</b> Full-page Ad in NBWC Commemorative Program 8 entries to NBWC & Benefit Banquet Banner at NBWC Mention on all collateral material once agreement	

is made 3 items in gift bags / or participant folder Mention from the stage at NBWC 1 link from our Web site to theirs Press opportunities where applicable 2 entries Saturday Luncheon with authors	is made 2 items in gift bags / or participant folder Mention from the stage at NBWC 1 link from our Web site to theirs Press opportunities where applicable
<i>Four (4) Student Scholarships of \$200 for Medgar Evers College English Majors</i>	<i>Two (2) Student Scholarships of \$200 for Medgar Evers College English Majors</i>
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<b><u>Octavia E. Butler</u></b> <b>Visionary Package</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>\$1,500.00</b></span>	<b><u>Amiri Baraka</u></b> <b>Revolutionary Package</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>\$1,000.00</b></span>
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**To submit Sponsorship, please contact: Center for Black Literature,  
Maeshay k. Lewis, Tel: 718-804-8882**

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