



16th National Black Writers Conference *The Beautiful Struggle: Black Writers Lighting the Way*

NBWC2022 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 30 – Saturday, April 2, 2022 (All Virtual)

The 16th National Black Writers Conference (NBWC2022) will be a virtual public gathering of writers, readers, scholars, literary professionals, students, and people across the United States and from a larger international community of artists and literature lovers. As a four-day online event, NBWC2022 will feature interactive roundtable discussions, readings, and much more, all created to broaden the public's appreciation of Black literature and Black life.

This year's theme is *The Beautiful Struggle: Black Writers Lighting the Way*. Using this theme, Conference participants will examine the ways that texts by Black writers document struggle and persistence *and* light the ways for overcoming obstacles and surviving in a racially constructed society. Also, attendees will have an opportunity to participate in "talkshops" where they can gain information on the craft of writing and on the publishing strategies.

At each Conference, the Center selects writers and artists who are exemplars of the Center's mission and values. This year's honorees are **HERB BOYD**, **DR. EDDIE S. GLAUDE JR.**, **TRACY K. SMITH**, and **JACQUELINE WOODSON**. **NANA CAMILLE YARBROUGH** will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award for the Literary and Performing Arts.

Participant bios, program information, registration details, and much more are housed online at www.CenterForBlackLiterature.org.

FREE NBWC2022 PRE-CONFERENCE EVENTS

Thursday, March 17

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm ET

John Oliver Killens Reading Series:

“African Diasporic Conversations and Readings”

KIA CORTHRON, *Moon and the Mars* (Seven Stories Press, 2021); LOUIS EDWARDS, *Ramadan Ramsey* (Amistad, 2021); COURTTIA NEWLAND, *A River Called Time* (Akashic Books, 2021), and NANA NKWETI, *Walking on Cowrie Shells* (Graywolf Press, 2021) are the featured guest writers. Collectively, our esteemed guests will share how their characters and narratives explore and embody the themes of family and relationships of the African diaspora, as well as the themes of resilience and triumph.

Friday, March 25

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm ET

NBWC2022 Poetry Slam

Sponsor: GREEN EARTH POETS CAFÉ

Hosts: NICOLE NAJMAH ABRAHAM (aka NAJMAH53) and TARISHI “MIDNIGHT” SHULER

Established in 2013, the Green Earth Poets Café exists to promote the performing arts as well to instill self-confidence and leadership skills among young people in New York City who live in economically challenged areas. Skilled poets from the Green Earth Poets Café, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, have been hosting this slam for several years and they always bring youthful, artful energy to each conference.

Novice and accomplished poets alike are encouraged to sign up and join this healthy competition among wordsmiths. Poets must be 16 years or older to compete. Cash prizes are awarded each year: First prize: \$125; second prize: \$75; and third prize: \$50. Green Earth Poets Café was founded by CURTIS HARRIS, a proud graduate of Medgar Evers College.

Monday, March 28

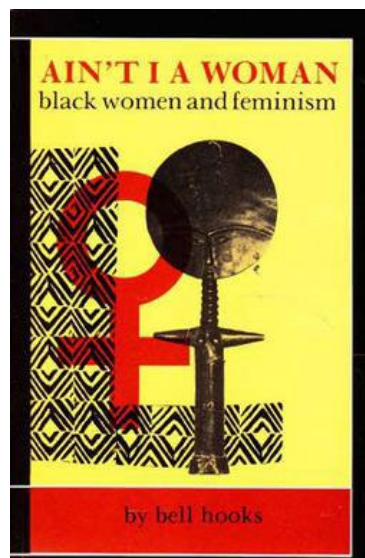
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm ET

“Medgar Evers College’s Women’s HerStory

Month Book Discussion: Ain’t I A Woman

by bell hooks”

The community is invited to read bell hooks’s culture-defining book *Ain’t I A Woman* and then participate in an enriching discussion. The interactive discussion will be co-led by BRENDA M. GREENE, Founder and Executive Director, Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, CUNY; NATANYA DUNCAN, Director of Africana Studies at Queens College, CUNY; and DONNA HILL, Assistant Professor of Professional Writing Medgar Evers College, CUNY.



NBWC2022 **FREE** COMMUNITY DAY

DAY ONE: Wednesday, March 30

Evening Host: **NOVELLA FORD**, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm ET

Opening Program: “The Beautiful Struggle: A Conversation”

Opening Libation: CHIEF BABA NEIL CLARKE

Opening Poem: NIKKY FINNEY

Opening Keynote: DR. HAKI R. MADHUBUTI

in Conversation with **DR. KEITH GILYARD**

Moderator: DR. JOANNE GABBIN

During the Opening Keynote for the 16th National Black Writers Conference, **Dr. Haki R. Madhubuti** and **Dr. Keith Gilyard** will engage in conversation on the Conference theme. **Dr. Joanne Gabbin** will moderate the conversation. The distinguished guests will share personal accounts of their achievements and reflect on the struggles Black writers have faced over the years. Additionally, they will share their perspectives on what lies ahead for Black literature, offer their perspectives on institution building, and reflect on the world of publishing.

Dr. Madhubuti is an author, educator, poet, and publisher of Third World Press. Dr. Gilyard is an author and is the Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English and African American Studies at Penn State. Dr. Gabbin is a poet, scholar, and executive director of the Furious Flower Poetry Center. **Nikky Finney**, National Book Award-winning poet and professor, will open the program.

#NBWCFlashback: That Time When Two Legends Took the Stage at the Conference: DR. HAKI R. MADHUBUTI Interviewing DANNY GLOVER in 2015.



Photo Credit: Center for Black Literature

NBWC2022 CONFERENCE EVENTS

DAY TWO: Thursday, March 31

Host: PROFESSOR WALLACE L. FORD, Medgar Evers College, CUNY

11:00 am – 3:00 pm ET

Scholarly Presentations on the Conference Theme, *The Beautiful Struggle: Black Writers Lighting the Way*.

Transformative Power Reflected in the Works of Jacqueline Woodson

11:00 AM – 11:45 PM ET

Professor Donna Hill, Moderator

- Aileen A. Johnson, “Jacqueline Woodson: From Dreaming to Meaning, Literature of Resistance, Resilience, and Rejoicing”
- Luvon Roberson, “We Code and We Transmute: A Literary Essay of Jacqueline Woodson’s *This Is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration*”

Voices Speaking Truth in Black Literature

12:00 PM – 1:15 PM ET

Dr. Kareen Odate, Moderator

- Dr. Kim Williams-Pulfer and Dr. Khadijah Ali-Coleman, “What Is Our Inheritance? Tracing the Evolution of Black Writers through the Work of The Hurston/Wright Foundation”
- Dr. Shawn Anthony Christian, “Eddie Glaude Jr., James Baldwin, and a Message for Black America”
- Rev. Dr. Angelle M. Jones, “The Beautiful Struggle of the Resilient Black Writer”

Cross-Cultural Exploration of Black Literature

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM ET

Professor Wallace L. Ford, Moderator

- Mary Romney-Schaab, “A West Indian in the Nazi Era: Discovering Resilience through Oral History”
- Dr. Lisa Wilson, “The Faithful Imaginary in Black Literature Aesthetics”
- Theodore Andrews, “The Ideological and Philosophical Influence on Dr. Amos N. Wilson’s Pan-African Nationalism”
- Hermina Marcellin, “The Audacity of a Hybrid Resistance in The Poetry of Derek Walcott, 1948-2013”

NBWC2022 CONFERENCE EVENTS

DAY TWO: Thursday, March 31

Host: **PATRICK OLIVER**, Say It Loud! Readers & Writers

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm ET

Readings from Our Elders: “Reflections of the Year 2020”

Participants of the Dr. Edith Rock Writing Workshop for Elders will share their writing related to the COVID-19 pandemic; the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others; and the January 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Curator: EISA ULEN RICHARDSON, Workshop Leader, Center for Black Literature

Moderator: DIANE RICHARDS of The Harlem Writers Guild



6:30 pm – 7:30 pm ET

NBWC Poetry Café: “A Tribute to Poet Kamilah Aisha Moon”

Co-Presenter: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Welcome and Introductions: DARREL HOLNES and JOANNA SIT.

The 10th NBWC Poetry Café will pay tribute to the beloved poet and educator **KAMILAH AISHA MOON**, who passed in September

2021. Medgar Evers College students **Malik Windsor** and **Malik Brizan-Reed** will open the program. Featured poets for this special event include **Ama Codjoe**, **Aracelis Girmay**, **Rachel Eliza Griffiths**, **Tyehimba Jess**, **Nina Angela Mercer**, and **John Murillo**.

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm ET

A Film Series and Discussion:

Love Supreme: A Celebration of Cinema, Literature, and Relationships

Co-Presenters: African Voices/Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival and Lecture Series (CAROLYN BUTTS, founder) and ImageNation Film Festival Inc. (MOIKGANSTI KGAMA, founder)

Moderator: REV. MALIKA LEE WHITNEY

In 2022, **ImageNation Film Festival Inc.** (ImageNation) and **Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival & Lecture Series** (Reel Sisters) celebrate 25 years of existence! ImageNation and Reel Sisters proudly join forces to present, exclusively for NBWC2022, a special film series and discussion that features short films from Butts’s and Kgama’s respective archives as well as from the landscape of contemporary films. Rev. Malika Lee Whitney, host and producer of WBAI Radio’s *Untitled*, will moderate the discussion.

INTERESTING FACTS TO KNOW

- ☑ This year’s Conference is part of the Center’s 20th anniversary.
- ☑ NBWC is All Virtual in 2022.
- ☑ City University of New York and Medgar Evers College students attend for **FREE!**

NBWC2022 CONFERENCE EVENTS

DAY THREE: Friday, April 1

Host: DR. LINDAMICHELLE BARON, York College, CUNY

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm ET

Roundtable:

“Between the World & Me: The Social Responsibility of the Black Writer”

At the first National Black Writers Conference in 1986, Conference Director John Oliver Killens posed the question: “What then is the responsibility of the Black writer to the community?” Now, 36 years later, faced with challenges of a global health pandemic and widespread racial injustice, we ask ourselves again: “What are our responsibilities as harbingers of the truth?” Speakers will address the essential role Black writers play in creating literature that exemplifies issues that are crucial to our cultural survival.

Speakers: EDWIDGE DANTICAT, MARC LAMONT HILL, MORGAN JERKINS, and PENIEL E. JOSEPH

Moderator: MARK ANTHONY NEAL

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm ET

Roundtable: “The Souls of Black Folk: Telling Our Stories”

This roundtable’s title is taken from W. E. B. Du Bois’s landmark book *The Souls of Black Folks*. Speakers will discuss how their works speak to the experiences of Black people throughout the African diaspora. Using fiction, poetry, drama, and essay, writers will illustrate the complexity of the Black experience in literature.

Speakers: JELANI COBB, MARLON JAMES, MAAZA MENGISTE, KHALIL GIBRAN MUHAMMAD, and DOLEN PERKINS-VALDEZ

Moderator: ERICA BUDDINGTON

5:00 pm – 6:30 pm ET

Roundtable: “Afrofuturism: Octavia Tried to Tell Us”

Renowned speculative fiction author Octavia E. Butler leaves a legacy that represents cautionary and haunting tales that reflect the impact of race, spirituality, class, gender, climate change, and social unrest on society. These tales are represented in fantasy, horror, and science fiction. Speakers will discuss Butler’s legacy and how their own texts reflect these themes.

Speakers: STEVEN BARNES, NATASHIA DEÓN, TANANARIVE DUE, and SHEREE RENÉE THOMAS

Moderator: JEWELLE GOMEZ

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm ET

Summit Keynote featuring **NBWC2022 Honorees** HERB BOYD, TRACY K. SMITH, and JACQUELINE WOODSON with Guest Speaker MARITA GOLDEN

Moderator: FARAH JASMINE GRIFFIN

During the Summit Keynote, speakers will address the Conference theme and discuss how the works of artists, poets, storytellers, and writers document struggle and determination and light the way for overcoming obstacles and thriving in a racially constructed society.

NBWC2022 CONFERENCE EVENTS

DAY FOUR: Saturday, April 2 (AFTERNOON)

Afternoon Host: **MO BEASLEY**, Beasley Media

About the National Black Writers Conference Talkshops: Every year, the National Black Writers Conference Talkshops provide working tools and strategies for attendees who wish to advance in specific literary arenas. Facilitators bring their expertise and professional experience to the talkshop and create space for question-and-answer sessions. Like a workshop, the talkshops are designed to enhance the attendees' writing projects and professional endeavors, but (unlike a workshop) attendees are **not** required to bring or share writing samples.

This year's talkshops focus on publishing, memoir, fiction, young adult literature, and poetry. All talkshops run concurrently.

11:00 am – 12:30 pm ET

■ PUBLISHING TALKSHOP

Monique Patterson (VP, Editorial Director, Acquisitions. St. Martin's Press/McMillan)

Stacey Barney (Associate Publisher Penguin, Random House)



■ MEMOIR TALKSHOP

Bernice L. McFadden (author of *First Born Girls*)

Elle Johnson (pictured, left; author of *The Officer's Daughter*; screenwriter of *Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madame C.J. Walker*)

■ FICTION TALKSHOP

Brian W. Smith (author and adjunct professor of creative writing)

Victor McGlothlin (screenwriter and author of *My Father's Son*)

■ YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE TALKSHOP

Tony Medina (poet and young adult author of *Follow-up Letters to Santa from Kids Who Never Got a Response*)

■ POETRY TALKSHOP

Keisha-Gaye Anderson (poet and author of *Gathering the Waters*, *Everything Is Necessary*, and *A Spell for Living*)

#NBWCFlashback:
At the National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium in 2019, Playwright and Poet Shaun Neblett reads for an attentive audience on campus.



Photo Credit: Lem Petermin/Center for Black Literature

NBWC2022 CONFERENCE EVENTS

DAY FOUR: Saturday, April 2 (AFTERNOON)

Afternoon Host: **MO BEASLEY**, Beasley Media

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm ET

Roundtable: “Nobody Knows My Name: Race Relations in Black Literature”

This roundtable is inspired by James Baldwin’s collection of essays, which addresses a range of topics including race relations, the relationship between the artist and society, and relationships between and among different gender identities. The speakers will explore these themes in the texts of writers who are highlighting social and cultural issues that affect the Black community and impact our overall society.

Speakers: LADEE HUBBARD, IBRAM X. KENDI, KEVIN POWELL, and MAURICE CARLOS RUFFIN

Moderator: KAREN HUNTER

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm ET

Roundtable: “Making a Way Out of No Way: Healing the Community”

Black writers, in their understanding of the continuous struggle for justice and the need to address aspirations and challenges that affect the Black community, have been a voice of strength and provided a balm for our souls. The speakers will discuss the transformative power of literature as an agent for both personal and social change.

Speakers: MONICA COLEMAN, OBERY M. HENDRICKS JR., KIESE LAYMON, and MARTHA SOUTHGATE

Moderator: THABITI LEWIS

5:00 pm – 6:30 pm ET

Roundtable: “From the Margin to the Center: Gender, Sexuality, and Feminism in Black Literature”

Many of the most compelling books of recent years have centered on themes that included Black womanhood, self-identity, and sexuality—topics that are ever-changing in their exploration within literary text. The speakers will shed light on the representation of gender, feminism, and sexuality as they are represented in the narratives of Black writers.

Speakers: EMILY BERNARD, BRITTNEY COOPER, and NICOLE DENNIS-BENN

Moderator: JERVETTE WARD



Photo Credit: Center for Black Literature

**#NBWCFlashback:
At the National Black
Writers Conference Biennial
Symposium in 2019, an
audience member speaks
during the Question-and-
Answers session.**

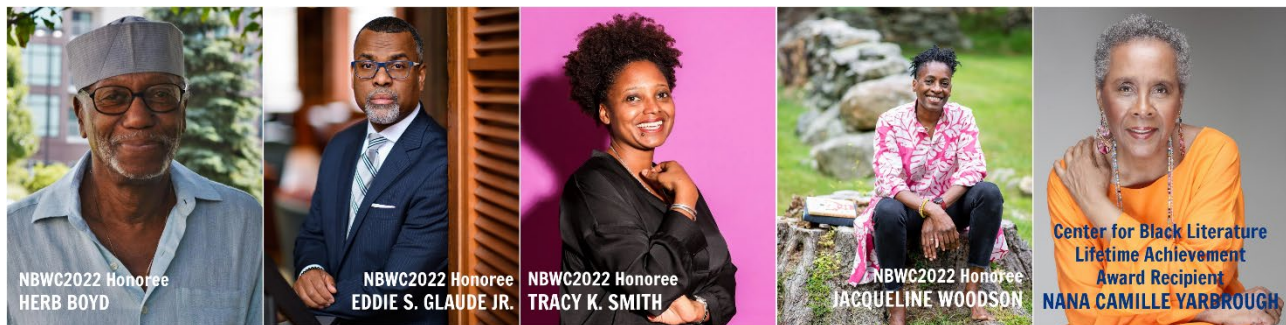
NBWC2022 CONFERENCE EVENTS

DAY FOUR: Saturday, April 2 (EVENING)

Evening Host: **LURIE DANIEL FAVORS**, Center for Law and Social Justice
and the *Lurie Daniel Favors Show* on SiriusXM's Urban View

CENTER FOR BLACK LITERATURE AWARDS PROGRAM

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm ET



Founded in 1986 at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, the National Black Writers Conference (NBWC) has a rich history of uplifting Black writers from all parts of the world. In recent years, the Center for Black Literature (founded in 2002 and the current presenters of NBWC) began selecting honorees whose life work would be celebrated at the four-day gathering. The Center selects writers and artists who are exemplars of the Black aesthetic and who reflect the vision and values of John Oliver Killens, the Conference's founder.

Honorees have included literary giants such as **Amiri Baraka, Steve Barnes, Kamau Brathwaite, Margaret Burroughs, Carl Clay, Maryse Condé, Edwidge Danticat, Kwame Dawes, Tananarive Due, Michael Eric Dyson, Charles Johnson, Woodie King Jr., David Levering Lewis, Dominique Morisseau, Walter Mosley, Stanley Nelson, Eugene B. Redmond, Voza Rivers, Susan L. Taylor, Quincy Troupe, Derek Walcott, Richard Wesley, Colson Whitehead,** and others. Honorary Chairs have included **Rita Dove, Myrlie Evers-Williams, Toni Morrison,** and others.

This year, **NANA CAMILLE YARBROUGH** will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award for the Literary and Performing Arts. And this year's Conference honorees are:

- **HERB BOYD** (NBWC2022 Honoree, John Oliver Killens Award)
- **EDDIE S. GLAUDE JR.** (NBWC2022 Honoree, W. E. B. Du Bois Award)
- **TRACY K. SMITH** (NBWC2022 Honoree, Gwendolyn Brooks Award)
- **JACQUELINE WOODSON** (NBWC2022 Honoree, Toni Morrison Award)

NBWC2022 POST-CONFERENCE EVENT

Thursday, April 28

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET

Youth Program: "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black"

Co-Sponsor: PENS OF POWER

CONTACT US

■ General Information

For general information about the Center for Black Literature, please email to: info@centerforblackliterature.org.

■ NBWC2022 Registration Inquiries

Please email info@centerforblackliterature.org.

■ All Publicity, Media Relations, and Event Marketing Inquiries

All inquiries for NBWC or CBL-related press interviews, media events, and event marketing initiatives, are directed to:

- Lea Byrd (Communications and Marketing Associate):
byrd@centerforblackliterature.org or
- April R. Silver (Director of Communications and Marketing):
pr@akilaworksongs.com
- For phone inquiries, call (718) 756-8501 (office)
- Twitter: @Center4BlackLit (DMs Welcome)

■ NBWC2022 Commemorative Journal or Sponsorship Inquiries

All inquiries related to the NBWC2022 commemorative journal are directed to **Clarence V. Reynolds** (Director of Literary Programs) at reynolds@centerforblackliterature.org.

All inquiries related to year-round sponsorship or partnership opportunities are directed to **Amber Magruder** (Project Manager) at magruder@centerforblackliterature.org

■ CBL DIGITAL MARKETING DIRECTORY

- Website: www.centerforblackliterature.org
- CBL Facebook: [@CenterForBlackLiterature](https://www.facebook.com/CenterForBlackLiterature)
- NBWC Facebook: [@NationalBlackWritersConference](https://www.facebook.com/NationalBlackWritersConference)
- Twitter: [@Center4BlackLit](https://twitter.com/Center4BlackLit)
- Instagram: [@Center4BlackLit](https://www.instagram.com/Center4BlackLit)
- YouTube: [@CenterForBlackLiteratureMedgarEversCollege](https://www.youtube.com/CenterForBlackLiteratureMedgarEversCollege)

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