



CENTER FOR BLACK LITERATURE
.....
20TH ANNIVERSARY JUBILEE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2022
6:30 PM

MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE, CUNY
1638 BEDFORD AVENUE | BROOKLYN, NY 11225





THE VICE PRESIDENT

October 20, 2022

I am honored to extend my greetings and congratulations to the leaders, supporters, and distinguished guests of the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College as you convene in Brooklyn, New York on the occasion of your 20th Anniversary Jubilee.

Since 2002, the Center for Black Literature has played a critical role in uplifting the stories of Black people throughout the African diaspora. As we reckon with the injustices of the past and confront those that still persist, your work emphasizes the importance of upholding representation and inclusivity in literature so that all may access its invaluable healing power.

Today, we take time to honor and thank the Black writers, activists, teachers, artists, and students who have participated in this important work. Your continued efforts to expand, broaden, and enrich the appreciation of Black literature will have an impact on generations to come.

Thank you for all you do, and congratulations on this important milestone. Doug and I wish you all the best for a bright future ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kamala Harris", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Dear Center for Black Literature Family, Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the **Center for Black Literature's 20th Anniversary Jubilee: A Cultural and Literary Celebration**. This jubilee and historic gathering is a celebration of Black writers, poets, scholars, and literary artists and a testament to the work they create. Our intergenerational programs touch the lives of many in the community, city, state, and country and throughout the African diaspora. Through our conferences, symposia, writing workshops, youth programs, readings, book club, literary journals, and radio show, we have supported Black writers and expanded the public's knowledge of Black literature.

The value of a Center for Black Literature is particularly critical now. Black writers, scholars, and poets are writing across genres from multidisciplinary perspectives about the nature of identity, race relations, class, gender relations, politics, and religion. They are complicating the notion of what it means to write as a Black writer. However, despite the expansion of Black readers, Black literature, and the increasing diversity of people and ethnic groups in our society, we are witnessing a rise in systemic racism and discrimination against men, women, children, immigrants and the LGBT community. This is evidenced by the banning of books, the backlash against critical race theory, and an escalation in acts of white supremacist acts. There is clearly a need to create spaces and communal conversations on the state of Black literature, the issues raised in the works of Black writers, and the issues facing our reading public. These conversations and critical analyses are important to the changing landscape and reflect the complexity of living in a global and diverse society.

One of the major goals of the Center for Black Literature (CBL) was to continue the conversations on the state of Black literature by hosting the National Black Writers Conferences (NBWC) begun by the late John Oliver Killens in 1986. Our CBL opening in 2002 honored the late poet Calvin Hernton and laid the groundwork for continuing this work on an annual basis. Since 2002, we have explored themes such as culture and politics, race, history and identity, genre, activism, and healing. Our award-winning writers, scholars, poets, and activists at the NBWCs span the African Diaspora. We have honored writers such as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Ishmael Reed, Sonia Sanchez, Haki Madhubuti, Edwidge Danticat, Walter Mosley, and Maryse Condé among others, and paid tribute to John Oliver Killens, Gwendolyn Brooks, Octavia Butler, Audre Lorde, Toni Cade Bambara, Paule Marshall, John A. Williams, Danny Glover, Bob Marley, Ntozake Shange, Esther Cooper Jackson, Louise Meriwether, and Nana Camille Yarbrough. A listing of our conferences and symposia since 2002 is contained in the **Commemorative Program Journal**.

Our Re-Envisioning Our Lives through Literature program and our Dr. Edith Rock Writing Workshop for Elders, both begun in 2003, speak to our goal of ensuring that we are reaching an intergenerational group of people. We are also committed to supporting writers through hosting writers and publishing workshops where writers can listen to a "talkshop" from an esteemed writer or participate in a workshop with fellow writers and receive feedback and individualized attention. Our *Killens Journal of Arts & Letters* provides emerging and contemporary writers, poets, and artists with a venue for presenting their work. We also host for the community, readings and discussions through our Killens Reading Series and our monthly Book Club. You can view our literary programs and interviews with writers on the Center for Black Literature YouTube page at www.centerforblackliterature.org.

Institutions representing and supporting the literature created by Black writers are disappearing in the face of a barrage of attacks on intellectual freedom and discourse in this country. As we continue to bring to light the rich creativity, genius, and brilliance in our community, I thank you for supporting our beloved Center for Black Literature and for working with us to ensure that it is sustained.

Peace and Blessings,



DR. BRENDA M. GREENE
 Founder and Executive Director

DR. PATRICIA RAMSEY

*President,
Medgar Evers College, The City University of New York*



Dear Dr. Greene:

Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York (CUNY) is proud to congratulate you and the Center for Black Literature on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary Jubilee: A Cultural and Literary Arts Experience. The Medgar Evers College Center for Black Literature institutionalized the National Black Writers Conference, founded by John Oliver Killens in 1986. Over the years, the Center for Black Literature has attracted some of the most celebrated writers and scholars across several genres and generations, including recipients of the NAACP Image Award and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, Nobel Prize winners, Pulitzer Prize winners, MacArthur “Genius” Fellows, New York Times best-sellers; Poet Laureates; and other distinguished writers.

We celebrate the Center for Black Literature for **twenty years** of uplifting the literature created by Black people from all over the world.

Congratulations!

Always,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Ramsey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the last name.



ABOUT THE CENTER FOR BLACK LITERATURE

Founded in 2002, by Dr. Brenda M. Greene, the mission of the Center for Black Literature (CBL) is to expand, broaden, and enrich the public's knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of Black literature by people of the African Diaspora. The Center builds an audience for the reading, discussion, research, study, and critical analysis of Black literature through a variety of programs and partnerships. CBL was also established to institutionalize the National Black Writers Conference (NBWC), founded by John Oliver Killens in 1986 at Medgar Evers College, CUNY.

To achieve its mission, CBL offers literary programs and educational workshops for the public, students of all ages, teachers, writers, and artists. Among its core programs are the National Black Writers Conference, Re-Envisioning Our Lives through Literature (R.O.L.L.), the Wild Seeds Writers Retreat, the Dr. Edith Rock Writing Workshop for Elders, the John Oliver Killens Reading Series, and the weekly *Writers on Writing* Radio Program. The Center also publishes the peer-reviewed *Killens Review of Arts & Letters*, and other journals generated from its youth and elders programs.

For nearly 20 years, the public and academic programs of the Center have been highly revered and have had a dynamic impact in the literary field. The author readings and book signings, journals, symposia, conferences, panel discussions, and writing workshops—and the Center's intellectual and accessible approach to programming—form an integrative approach that sets CBL apart from others. CBL's body of work is known for the way in which it ensures that Black literary scholarship and conversations are valued and sustained.

Through its collaborations with public schools and organizations such as the Brooklyn Public Library, the Brooklyn Museum, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Brooklyn Literary Council and PEN America, the Center for Black Literature serves as a vehicle for nurturing and cultivating the critical reading and writing habits of a cross-generation of readers and writers and provides university, community and public institutions with various literary programs. Funding and support for Center programs have been provided by the public and private sector and include organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, Humanities New York, Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, the New-York Historical Society, Poets & Writers, and the Brooklyn Community Foundation, as well as support from local and state elected officials.

Housed in Medgar Evers College's School of Professional and Community Development, the Center collaborates with educational, literary, cultural arts, and media organizations—both locally and nationally. It partners with Medgar Evers College, the City University of New York, local high schools, as well as with the Center for Law and Social Justice, PEN America, the Brooklyn Literary Council, the Brooklyn Public Library, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, RestorationART at Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, and many other entities.

DR. BRENDA M. GREENE

Founder and Executive Director, Center for Black Literature



Dr. Brenda M. Greene, who has committed her life to teaching, learning, and scholarship, is the Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Black Literature, Director of the National Black Writers Conference, and Professor of English at Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York. Professor Greene's research and scholarly work include composition, African American literature, and multicultural literature. She is the editor of *The African Presence and Influence on the Cultures of the Americas*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2010), a book of essays that focus on the impact of Africa in the Americas from the perspectives of literature, language, music, dance, and psychology, and co-editor of *Resistance and Transformation: Conversations with Black Writers*, Morton Books (2010), *Meditations and Ascensions: Black Writers on Writing*, Third World Press (2008), *Redefining Ourselves, Black Writers in the Nineties*, Peter Lang Publishers (1999) and *Rethinking American Literature*, National Council of Teachers of English, (1997). Dr. Greene holds a PhD in English with a concentration in composition from New York University and has extensive essays, grants, book reviews, and presentations in English Studies and literature.

Dr. Greene's educational leadership and professional accomplishments span over 40 years. Before coming to Medgar Evers College in 1980, she taught at the Board of Education and was Director of the Right to Read Program at Malcolm King College Harlem Extension. Her expertise and leadership positioned her to serve on many college committees and to serve as director of literacy and writing programs at the College.

As a scholar and literary activist in English Studies and African Diaspora literature, Dr. Greene has led literary and writing seminars. Through the Center for Black Literature, Dr. Greene has consistently pursued her passion of expanding, broadening, and enriching the public's knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of the value of the literature produced by Black writers and worked to seek support for nurturing and cultivating the critical reading and writing habits of a cross-generation of readers and writers. Dr. Greene has also continued the tradition of directing and hosting the National Black Writers Conferences (NBWCs) that have been given at Medgar Evers College since 1986. She also hosts a weekly radio program, *Writers on Writing*, which features writers from the African Diaspora discussing their novels, poems, plays, nonfiction and their lives over the airwaves of WNYE, 91.5 F.M. Dr. Greene has also received many literary, educational, and cultural awards.

The proud mother of two sons, Talib Kweli Greene, an internationally known hip hop artist, and Jamal K. Greene, Professor of Constitutional Law at Columbia University and the grandmother of Amani, Diani, Riya, Ayan, Kian, and Justice, Dr. Greene attributes the success of her sons to the importance that she and their father stressed about realizing, identifying, and pursuing one's passion.

PROGRAM

COCKTAIL HOUR WITH LIVE JAZZ
RICARDO STROBERT QUARTET

GREETINGS
LURIE DANIEL FAVORS
Master of Ceremonies

LIBATION
NANA CAMILLE YARBROUGH

CBL 20TH ANNIVERSARY JUBILEE VIDEO

WELCOME REMARKS
DR. PATRICIA RAMSEY
President, Medgar Evers College, The City University of New York

DR. BRENDA M. GREENE
*Founder and Executive Director,
Center for Black Literature*

DR. SONIA SANCHEZ
Chair, Honorary Committee

POETRY READING
MAHOGANY L. BROWNE

DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE
MICHAEL ANTHONY GREEN

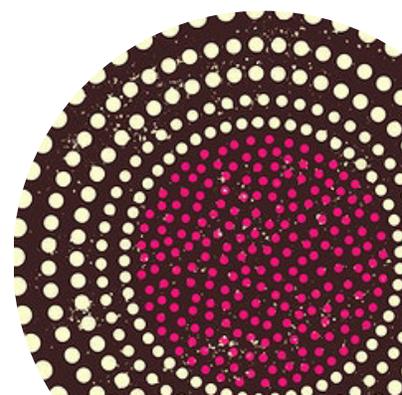
HONOREES
CHERYL WILLS
*Author and Emmy Award-Winning Journalist,
Spectrum News NY1*
Presented by C. Zawadi Morris

TROY D. JOHNSON
*Founder & President, AALBC.com, LLC
(African American Literature Book Club)*
Presented by Patrick Oliver

REFLECTIONS ON THE
CENTER FOR BLACK LITERATURE
20th Anniversary Jubilee
Honorary Committee Members

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

LIVE AUCTION
JUSTIN IFILL



HONOREE

CHERYL WILLS

*Author and Emmy Award-Winning Journalist,
Spectrum News NY1*



Cheryl Wills is an Emmy Award-winning journalist for Spectrum News New York 1. As the first African American woman to host a prime-time nightly newscast for the cable network, Cheryl anchors the Emmy-nominated broadcast *Live at Ten*, weeknights. Cheryl has been with NY1 since its launch in 1992 and is one of the station's most recognizable journalists for breaking news and special coverage. She is also the talk show host of the weekly public affairs program, *In Focus with Cheryl Wills* where she interviews the most powerful newsmakers and celebrities in the country.

Cheryl is also the acclaimed author of a series of books about her family's transition from slavery to freedom in the United States. *Die Free: A Heroic Family Tale*, *The Emancipation of Grandpa Sandy Wills*, *Emancipated: My Family's Fight for Freedom* and *EMMA* all chronicle her 3x great-grandfather's heroic service as a member of the United States Colored Troops during The Civil War.

On March 25, 2011, Cheryl Wills made history as the first journalist invited to speak at the United Nations General Assembly Hall for The International Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which was broadcast live around the world on UNTV.

Cheryl has been honored numerous times during her 30+ year journalism career from groups like The New York Press Club, The Newswomen's Club of New York, and The Associated Press. She received a special medal from the United Nations Correspondents Association, personally presented to her by U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. *City & State Magazine* hailed Cheryl as one of New York's most "remarkable women" and Cheryl is one of the women profiled in the award-winning 2020 book *She is Me: How Women Will Save the World*.

Cheryl is most proud to be the Commander and Lifetime Descendant Member of the New York Chapter of the Sons and Daughters of the United States Colored Troops – a national organization of Civil War descendants who raise awareness about 200,000 Black soldiers who bravely served during The Civil War. She is a graduate of the prestigious S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.



HONOREE

TROY D. JOHNSON

*Founder & President, AALBC.com, LLC
(African American Literature Book Club)*

Troy D. Johnson is the founder and webmaster of AALBC.com (The African American Literature Book Club), and President of AALBC.com, LLC. He started AALBC.com in October of 1997, and today it is the oldest, largest, and most frequently visited website dedicated to books written by, or about, people of African descent. A literary activist, Johnson celebrates Black culture through books. He also publishes literary fiction featuring Black characters under the AALBC Aspire imprint. He is a tireless advocate for independent booksellers and websites.

In addition to his entrepreneurial ventures, Mr. Johnson has more than 20 years of corporate experience, in roles ranging from designing wide area networks for defense contractors to managing international projects for Wall Street firms. As an educator, Johnson has been an adjunct lecturer at Baruch College's Zicklin School of Business since 2014.

Johnson has presented at conferences internationally and throughout the United States, including The Wall Street Journal's Future of Everything Festival, the National Black Writers Conference, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Book Expo America, The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference, The Antigua & Barbuda International Literary Festival, The Kingston Book Festival, The National Black Book Festival, Harvard African American Student Union, and many others.

Johnson has been recognized in articles that have appeared in *Publishers Weekly*, *New York Amsterdam News*, *The New York Times*, *Essence Magazine*, *Black Issues Book Review*, *The Network Journal*, *The New York Beacon*, *Emerge*, *Black Enterprise*, *The Philadelphia Sun*, and many other publications. He has also written articles and provided content to publications ranging from *Mosaic Literary Magazine*, *the Electronic Urban Report*, and the *Black EOE Journal*.

Johnson has served on numerous advisory boards and committees, including Bookshop.org, Syracuse University's Alumni Association Board, the Literary Freedom Project, Harlem World Magazine, The Sacramento Black Book Festival, The Harlem Book Fair, Black Americans in Publishing, and New York Is Book Country.

Johnson is the recipient of several awards and honors, including receiving: the Pillar Award from the Go On Girl! Book Club in 2021; the "Literary Activist of the Year" Award in 2017; The Literary Trailblazers Award from the African American Literary Awards Show; a Certificate of Appreciation from the City of Los Angeles for "Extraordinary Contributions to the Literacy Legacy of Los Angeles"; an "Outstanding Alumni Award" from Syracuse University; and a "Citation for Excellence" from Grumman Corporation as well as other honors and awards. His website AALBC.com was listed by EarthLink as one of "The 100 Best Websites for African Americans." In 2005, he was named one of the 50 Most Powerful African Americans in Publishing by *Black Issues Book Review* magazine.

Troy Johnson holds a BS in Electrical Engineering from Syracuse University, an MS from Polytechnic University, and an MBA from New York University's Stern School of Business. He has also completed Stanford University's Publishing on the Web course. He has three daughters and lives with his family in Tampa, Florida.

HONORARY CHAIR

DR. SONIA SANCHEZ

Poet, Writer and Professor

Poet. Mother. Professor. National and International lecturer on Black Culture and Literature, Women's Liberation, Peace and Racial Justice. Sponsor of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Board Member of MADRE. Dr. Sonia Sanchez is the author of over 20 books including *Homecoming*, *We a BaddDDD People*, *Love Poems*, *I've Been a Woman*, *A Sound Investment and Other Stories*, *Homegirls and Handgrenades*, *Under a Soprano Sky*, *Wounded in the House of a Friend* (Beacon Press 1995), *Does Your House Have Lions?* (Beacon Press, 1997), *Like the Singing Coming off the Drums* (Beacon Press, 1998), *Shake Loose My Skin* (Beacon Press, 1999), *Morning Haiku* (Beacon Press, 2010), and most recently, *Collected Poems* (Beacon Press, 2021). In addition to being a contributing editor to *Black Scholar* and *The Journal of African Studies*, she has edited an anthology, *We Be Word Sorcerers: 25 Stories by Black Americans*. *BMA: The Sonia Sanchez Literary Review* is the first African American Journal that discusses the work of Sonia Sanchez and the Black Arts Movement. A recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts, the Lucretia Mott Award for 1984, the Outstanding Arts Award from the Pennsylvania Coalition of 100 Black Women, the Community Service Award from the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, she is a winner of the 1985 American Book Award for *Homegirls and Handgrenades*, the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Humanities for 1988, the Peace and Freedom Award from Women International League for Peace and Freedom (W.I.L.P.F) for 1989, a PEW Fellowship in the Arts for 1992-1993 and the recipient of Langston Hughes Poetry Award for 1999. *Does Your House Have Lions?* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. She is the Poetry Society of America's 2001 Robert Frost Medalist and a Ford Freedom Scholar from the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. Her poetry also appeared in the movie *Love Jones*.

Sonia Sanchez has lectured at over 500 universities and colleges in the United States and has traveled extensively, reading her poetry in Africa, Cuba, England, the Caribbean, Australia, Europe, Nicaragua, the People's Republic of China, Norway, and Canada. She was the first Presidential Fellow at Temple University and she held the Laura Carnell Chair in English at Temple University. She is the recipient of the Harper Lee Award, 2004, Alabama Distinguished Writer, and the National Visionary Leadership Award for 2006. She is the recipient of the 2005 Leeway Foundation Transformational Award and the 2009 Robert Creeley Award. Currently, Sonia Sanchez is one of 20 African American women featured in "Freedom Sisters," an interactive exhibition created by the Cincinnati Museum Center and Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition. In December of 2011, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter selected Sonia Sanchez as Philadelphia's first Poet Laureate, calling her "The Longtime Conscience of the City."



HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBER

DR. GREG E. CARR

Dr. Greg E. Carr teaches “Race, Law and Change” at the Howard University School of Law. Carr is also an associate professor of Afro-American Studies at Howard University, serving as Department Chair for 12 years. Prof. Carr is First Vice President of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations and editor of *The Compass: The Journal of ASCAC*. A former board member of the National Council for Black Studies, Prof. Carr has twice been named “HBCU Male Faculty Member of the Year” by HBCU Digest.

His written scholarship has appeared in journals such as *Socialism and Democracy*, *Publications of the Modern Languages Association* and *The CLA Journal*, among others, and he has contributed chapters to books such as *Malcolm X: A Historical Reader*, *The African American Studies Reader*, *Contemporary African American Literature: The Living Canon* and *The African World History Project*, among others.

He is a commentator in a wide range of print, electronic and social media, is a weekly panelist on the daily digital news show *Roland Martin Unfiltered* and co-hosts Karen Hunter’s weekly Saturday YouTube series *In Class With Carr*. His commentaries on the 50th anniversary of the Black Panther Party and the opening of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture appeared in the August and September 2016 issues of *Ebony* magazine. Prof. Carr’s chapter, “Re-Literacy and African Power in the Trump Era,” appears in *Not Our President*, Third World Press’ book-length commentary on the Trump presidency.



HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBER

EDWIDGE DANTICAT

Edwidge Danticat is the author of several books including *Breath, Eyes, Memory*; *The Farming of Bones*; *The Dew Breaker*; and *Claire of the Sea Light*, as well as *The Art of Death*, a National Books Critics Circle finalist. She is also the editor of *The Butterfly’s Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States*. She has written books for young adults and children as well as a travel narrative, *After the Dance: A Walk Through Carnival in Jacmel, Haiti*, and a collection of essays, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. She is a 2009 MacArthur Fellow, and a 2020 winner of the Vilcek Prize. Her most recent book, *Everything Inside: Stories*, is a 2020 winner of the Bocas Fiction Prize, The Story Prize, and the National Books Critics Circle Fiction Prize.

HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBER

NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES



Nikole Hannah-Jones is the Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of the *1619 Project* and a staff writer at *The New York Times Magazine*. She has spent her career investigating racial inequality and injustice, and her reporting has earned her the MacArthur Fellowship, known as the Genius grant, a Peabody Award, two George Polk Awards and the National Magazine Award three times. Hannah-Jones also earned the John Chancellor Award for Distinguished Journalism and was named Journalist of the Year by the National Association of Black Journalists and the Newswomen’s Club of New York. In 2020, she was inducted into the Society of American Historians and in 2021, into the North Carolina Media Hall of Fame. Nikole was named as one of the Most Influential People in the in 2021 by *Time Magazine*.

In 2016, Hannah-Jones co-founded the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, which seeks to increase the number of reporters and editors of color. She holds a Master of Arts in Mass Communication from the University of North Carolina and earned her Bachelor of Arts in History and African-American studies from the University of Notre Dame.

Hannah-Jones is the Knight Chair in Race and Journalism at Howard University, where she has founded the Center for Journalism & Democracy.

HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBER

KAREN HUNTER



Karen Hunter is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, professor, publisher, and “change agent,” according to *Essence* magazine, which named her one of the “Woke 100” of 2018. She was also selected to the 2020 *Ebony* magazine’s Power 100 List. As CEO of Karen Hunter Publishing, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, she published more than 35 books, including No. 1 NYT bestseller *True You* by pop icon Janet Jackson. Karen has been named one of the 100 Most Important Radio Talk Show Hosts in America by industry bible *Talkers Magazine* every year since 2015. A New Jersey native and a Drew University graduate, Karen has been a full-time professor and distinguished lecturer in the Film & Media Department at Hunter College in New York City since 2004. In 2020, Karen launched Knarrative, which is home to the largest Africana Studies classroom in the world.



HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBER

TALIB KWELI

The Brooklyn-based MC earned his stripes as one of the most lyrically-gifted, socially aware and politically insightful

rappers to emerge in the last 20 years. His book, *Vibrate Higher: A Rap Story*, is a firsthand account of hip-hop as a political force.

“I’m a touring artist. I’m an artist that’s internationally known. I’m not just a local artist at this point in my career. I’m cognizant of the fact that what I do is beyond where it started. I’m trying to reach the apex of where I am now, but without turning my back on or dismissing what I’ve done before.”

After nearly 20 years of releasing mesmerizing music, Talib Kweli stands as one of the world’s most talented and most accomplished Hip Hop artists. Whether working with Mos Def as one-half of *Black Star*, partnering with producer Hi-Tek for *Reflection Eternal*, releasing landmark solo material or collaborating with Kanye West, Pharrell Williams, Just Blaze, J Dilla, or Madlib, Kweli commands attention by delivering top-tier lyricism, crafting captivating stories and showing the ability to rhyme over virtually any type of instrumental.

In 2011, Kweli founded Javotti Media, which is self-defined as “a platform for independent thinkers and doers.” Kweli has set out to make Javotti Media (which released his 2011 album, *Gutter Rainbows*, and is named after his paternal grandmother) into a media powerhouse that releases music, films and books.



HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBER

DR. CORNEL WEST

Dr. Cornel West, affectionately known to many as Brother West, is the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Chair at

Union Theological Seminary. Dr. West teaches on the works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as well as courses in Philosophy of Religion, African American Critical Thought, and a wide range of subjects—including but by no means limited to, the classics, philosophy, politics, cultural theory, literature, and music. He has a passion to communicate to a vast variety of publics in order to keep alive the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.—a legacy of telling the truth and bearing witness to love and justice.

Dr. West is the former Professor of the Practice of Public Philosophy at Harvard University and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University. Cornel West graduated magna

cum laude from Harvard in three years and obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy at Princeton.

He has written 20 books and has edited 13. He is best known for his classics, *Race Matters* and *Democracy Matters*, and for his memoir, *Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud*. His most recent book, *Black Prophetic Fire*, offers an unflinching look at nineteenth and twentieth-century African American leaders and their visionary legacies.

Dr. West has partnered with [MasterClass.com](https://www.masterclass.com) to provide teachings on several influential courses including a class with Pharrell Williams on Empathy, MasterClass’s first-ever multi-instructor class on Black History, Black Freedom & Black Love, as well as Dr. West’s standalone class on Philosophy. Visit www.cornelwest.com and click the MasterClass banner to learn more.

FEATURED ARTISTS



LIVE JAZZ

RICARDO STROBERT
Alto & Soprano Sax, Flute

ALEC AIRD
Keyboard

GENE TORRES
Bass

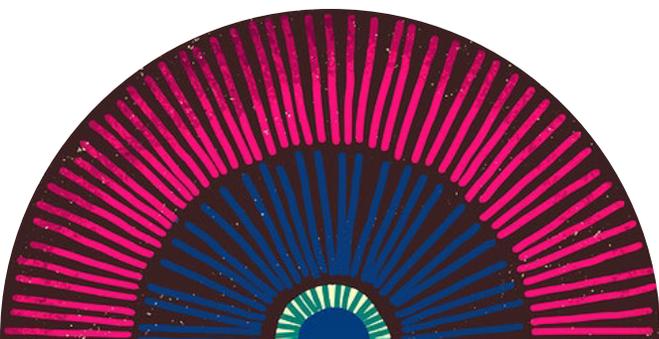
LARRY WILLIAMS
Drums



POETRY READING

MAHOGANY L. BROWNE
Poet, Activist and Educator

Mahogany L. Browne, selected as Kennedy Center's Next 50 and Wesleyan's 2022-23 Distinguished Writer-in-Residence, the Executive Director of JustMedia, Artistic Director of Urban Word, a writer, playwright, organizer, and educator. Browne has received fellowships from Arts for Justice, Air Serenbe, Cave Canem, Poets House, Mellon Research & Rauschenberg. She is the author of recent works: *Vinyl Moon*, *Chlorine Sky*, *Woke: A Young Poets Call to Justice*, *Woke Baby*, and *Black Girl Magic*. Founder of the diverse lit initiative Woke Baby Book Fair, Browne's latest poetry collection *Chrome Valley* is a promissory note to survival and available from Norton, Spring 2023. As she readies for her stage debut of *Chlorine Sky* at Steppenwolf Theater in Chicago, Illinois, she drinks coffee while living in Brooklyn, NY. She is the first ever poet-in-residence at Lincoln Center.





DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE



MICHAEL GREEN *Art Director, Producer and Actor*

Michael Green has received critical praise for his ongoing portrayal of Dr. King in Jeff Stetson's "The Meeting" at the Schomburg Center, national and Tri-State area venues. Outstanding credits include Esther Armah's *Savior* (Dwyer Cultural Center), *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Our Place Theatre), *Guest at Central Park West* (Hadley Players), *A Lesson Before Dying* (New Repertory Theatre), *The Blacks* (Classical Theatre of Harlem), *Blues Train* (National Black Theatre), and *Camp Logan* (Victoria Five Theatre. Michael, as a voice-over actor, has done several commercials and was the voice of Uncle Al on *Little Bill* (Bill Cosby's). He has written/produced *Whistle in*

Mississippi: The lynching of Emmett Till, *MLK: If He Had Sneezed*, and *Barbara Jordan: I Dared To Be Me* in collaboration with Voza Rivers/ New Heritage Theatre Group. He also collaborated with Voza Rivers to produce Celeste B. Walker's *Black Wallstreet & Camp Logan*.

For 12 years, Michael was a drama instructor for the Artists Collective in Hartford, Ct. and since 2004 & currently a Teaching Artist for Medgar Evers College Center For Black Literature "Re-envisioning Ourselves through Literature" ROLL program, founded by Dr. Brenda Greene. As Producer / Director of Shades of Truth Theatre for 16 years, Michael is committed to presenting positive theatre that is provocative and educational while illuminating the total Black Experience. Shades of Truth Theatre has performed at High schools, Middle Schools, Colleges, and Universities throughout New York and the Tri-State. He recently developed a series of Anti-Bullying workshops with Monique Schomburg and Hofstra University.



ADEMOLA OLUGEBEFOLA *Artist, Designer, Educator and Activist*

Ademola Olugbefola is one of the original founders of the WEUSI Artist Collective in 1965 and the first Educational Director of the WEUSI Academy of African Arts and Studies in 1969.

Ademola began his professional career as a bassist. He played with several small ensembles throughout the New York metropolitan area during the late '50s and early 1960s. He later studied big band bass with the great Attila Zoller. "Sometimes while playing certain notes and passages I would see specific colors while grooving with my eyes closed..." he noted. This experience, a phenomenon, fascinated him, and he would then have the good fortune of meeting

trumpeter, composer and bandleader Calvin Strickland, who founded POMUSICART, Inc. While serving as art director of POMUSICART (poetry, music and art) in the mid-'60s, Ademola experimented with attempts to capture the sensory effect of sound in painting that culminated with the "Blues for Nat Turner Jazz Suite." In spontaneously combining poetry, music and visual art in series of concerts at the Skyline Ballroom at the former Hotel Theresa in Harlem, this avant-garde production was reminiscent of traditional African Ceremonial Theatre with the dynamics of a contemporary sensibility.

He retired from playing music in the late '60s to devote full time to the "visual sciences."

He is a highly respected cultural activist and renowned Harlem artist, whose art and career papers are in the permanent collection of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Hatch-Billops Archives, Howard University, and scores of other American institutions. He is one of the Executive Producers of the forthcoming landmark film, *Drama Mamas: Black Female Theatre Directors in the Spotlight and Remembered*.

For over the past four decades, Ademola has lived and worked in Harlem. His current residency at the Chashama Harlem Studios, in the artist's words: "...has been a great creative experience and provides me with critical work space and prolific incentive to expand my longstanding interest in the exploration of pure color and form in painting."

His work is in numerous collections of prominent Harlemites, and individual collectors and institutions internationally.

NATIONAL WRITING CONTEST



CELEBRATING BLACK WRITERS: VOICES CALLING FOR ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Sponsored by the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the University of Pittsburgh School of Education



FIRST PLACE COLLEGE
WILLIAM LOHIER

William Lohier is a senior at Harvard College from Brooklyn, New York, concentrating in African American Studies and English. A fiction writer and former NYC Youth Poet Laureate, William studies the intersection between Black speculative imaginaries and ongoing decolonial struggle as well as traditions of Black narrative resistance to White supremacist heteropatriarchal teleologies.



SECOND PLACE COLLEGE
MARIAN JONES

Marian Jones grew up in Sacramento, California, is a sophomore at Sacramento City College. She is studying English literature and would like to apply this education toward being a speculative fiction writer and an essayist of social and governmental reform. In addition, Marian is studying grant writing through the Simi Institute in Simi Valley, California, and intends to be a grant writer for higher education institutions and/or nonprofit organizations. Marian enjoys the genres of poetry, fantasy, and science fiction; and enjoys singing and jewelry making. Marian lives with her partner, Sam, in Davis, California.



FIRST PLACE HIGH SCHOOL
ELIJAH ELVIN

Elijah Elvin is from Brooklyn, New York. He is an eighteen-year-old freshman at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. His desired major is political science, and he also has interests in philosophy, literature, and creative writing. Furthermore, his current career goals include becoming a lawyer, author, and philanthropist in order to help people overcome legal and socioeconomic problems that they may face while also spreading positivity and inspiration to the world through his poetry.



SECOND PLACE HIGH SCHOOL
REBECCA BEAVER

Rebecca Beaver was a senior at Tenafly High School when she wrote her award-winning fictional work “Dark Minds, Dark Bodies.” She is currently in her first year at Wesleyan University. Rebecca likes to read, go to the movies, and run in her free time.

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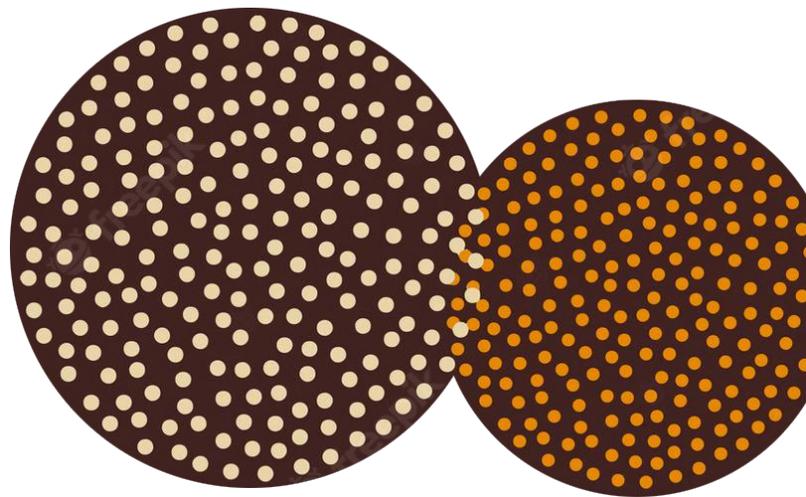
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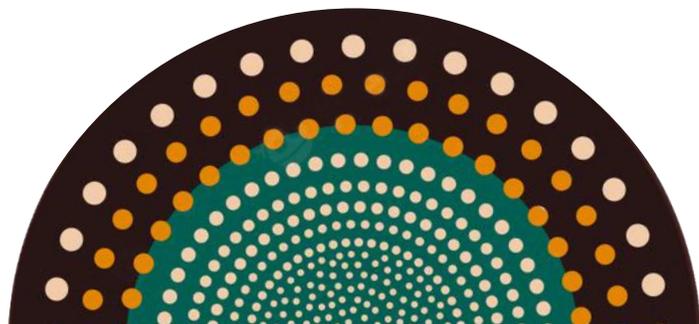
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The Center for Black Literature is supported in part by an American Rescue Plan Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support general operating expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Individualized poetry writing session with
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A written evaluation and follow up coaching session with
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LOT #5

Poetry Review with Patricia Spears Jones
+
Art Piece from Ramona Candy

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CENTER FOR BLACK LITERATURE, MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE (CUNY) NATIONAL BLACK WRITERS CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

MARCH 2002 Center for Black Literature Opening Celebration. A Tribute to Calvin C. Hernton. Featured Presenter: Avery Brooks.

MARCH 2003 Sixth National Black Writers Conference, “Literature as Access: Connecting to Ourselves, Our Communities, Our Histories.” Featured Writers: Amiri Baraka, Linda Susan Jackson, Louis Reyes Rivera, and Tracy K. Smith.

MARCH 2004 Seventh National Black Writers Conference, “A Tribute to and Symposium on John Oliver Killens: The Culture & Politics of Black Literature.” Keynote Address: Gil Noble.

MARCH 2006 Eighth National Black Writers Conference, “Black Literature: Expanding Conversations on Race, Identity, History, and Genre.” Honorary Chair: Dr. Myrlie Evers-Williams; Honorees: Samuel Delany, Marita Golden, Haki Madhubuti, and Walter Mosley.

MARCH 2007 National Black Writers Symposium, “Redemption Song: A Tribute to Bob Marley.” Keynote Address: Kwame Dawes.

MARCH 2008 Ninth National Black Writers Conference, “Black Writers: Reading and Writing to Transform Their Lives and the World.” Honorary Chair: Susan L. Taylor; Honorees: Randall Robinson, Sonia Sanchez, Cornel West, and Cheryl and Wade Hudson. This Conference was dedicated to the centennial of author Richard Wright.

MARCH 2009 National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, “Honoring the Work and Life of Octavia E Butler.”

MARCH 2010 10th National Black Writers Conference, “And Then We Heard the Thunder: Black Writers Reconstructing Memories and Lighting the Way.” Toni Morrison, Honorary Chair of the 10th National Black Writers Conference; Honorees: Amiri Baraka, Kamau Brathwaite, and Edison O. Jackson.

MARCH 2011 National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, “Honoring the Work and Life of Award-Winning Playwright August Wilson.”

MARCH 2012 11th National Black Writers Conference, “The Impact of Migration, Popular Culture and the Natural Environment in the Literature of Black Writers.” Honorees: Dr. Howard Dodson, Nikki Giovanni, Ishmael Reed, and Ngugi wa Thiong’o.

MARCH 2013 National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, “A Tribute to the Life and Works of Toni Cade Bambara.”

MARCH 2014 12th National Black Writers Conference, “Reconstructing the Master Narrative.” Honorees: Derek Walcott, Margaret E. Burroughs, Maryse Condé, Walter Mosley, Quincy Troupe. A Tribute to Audre Lorde and Esther Cooper Jackson. Featured Presenter: Angela Davis.

MARCH 2015 National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, “Voices of Liberation and Resistance and Tribute to Danny Glover.”

MARCH 2016 13th National Black Writers Conference, “Writing Race, Embracing Difference.” Honorary Chair: Rita Dove; Honorees: Edwidge Danticat, Michael Eric Dyson, Charles Johnson, and Woodie King Jr.

MARCH 2017 National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, “Our Miss Brooks: A Centennial Celebration.” A Tribute to Gwendolyn Brooks.

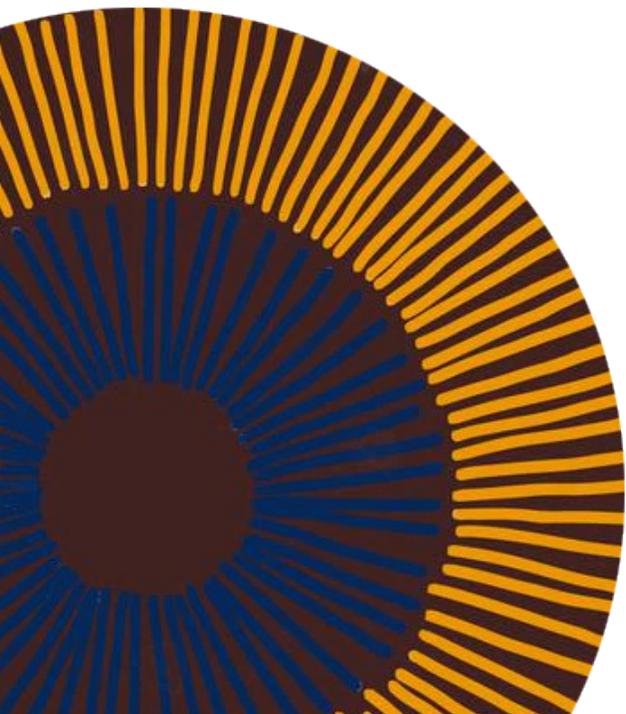
MARCH 2018 14th National Black Writers Conference, “Gathering at the Waters: Healing, Legacy, and Activism in Black Literature.” Honorary Chair: Dr. Myrlie Evers-Williams; Honorees: Steven Barnes, Kwame Dawes, Tananarive Due, David Levering Lewis, Eugene B. Redmond, Susan L. Taylor, and Colson Whitehead. A Tribute to Louise Meriwether.

MARCH 2019 National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, “Playwrights and Screenwriters at the Crossroads: A Tribute to Ntozake Shange.”

NOVEMBER 2020 15th National Black Writers Conference, “Activism, Identity, and Race: Playwrights and Screenwriters at the Crossroads.” Honorees: Carl Clay, Dominique Morisseau, Stanley Nelson, Voza Rivers, and Richard Wesley. A Tribute to Chadwick Boseman and Toni Morrison.

MARCH 2021 National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, “They Cried I Am: The Life and Work of Paule Marshall and John A. Williams, Unsung Black Literary Voices.”

MARCH 2022 16th National Black Writers Conference, “The Beautiful Struggle: Black Writers Lighting the Way.” Honorees: Herb Boyd, Eddie S. Glaude Jr., Tracy K. Smith, and Jacqueline Woodson. Lifetime Achievement Award to Nana Camille Yarbrough.



MEDGAR EVERS**For Charles Evers**

The man whose height his fear improved he
 arranged to fear no further. The raw
 intoxicated time was time for better birth or
 a final death.

Old styles, old tempos, all the engagement of
 the day – the sedate, the regulated fray –
 the antique light, the Moral rose, old gusts,
 tight whistlings from the past, the mothballs
 in the Love at last our man forswore.

Medgar Evers annoyed confetti and assorted
 brands of businessmen's eyes.

The shows came down: to maxims and surprise.
 And palsy.

Roaring no rapt arise – ye to the dead, he
 leaned across tomorrow. People said that
 he was holding clean globes in his hands.

Gwendolyn Brooks

From: *The World of Gwendolyn Brooks*, Harper & Row
 Publishers, New York, 1971

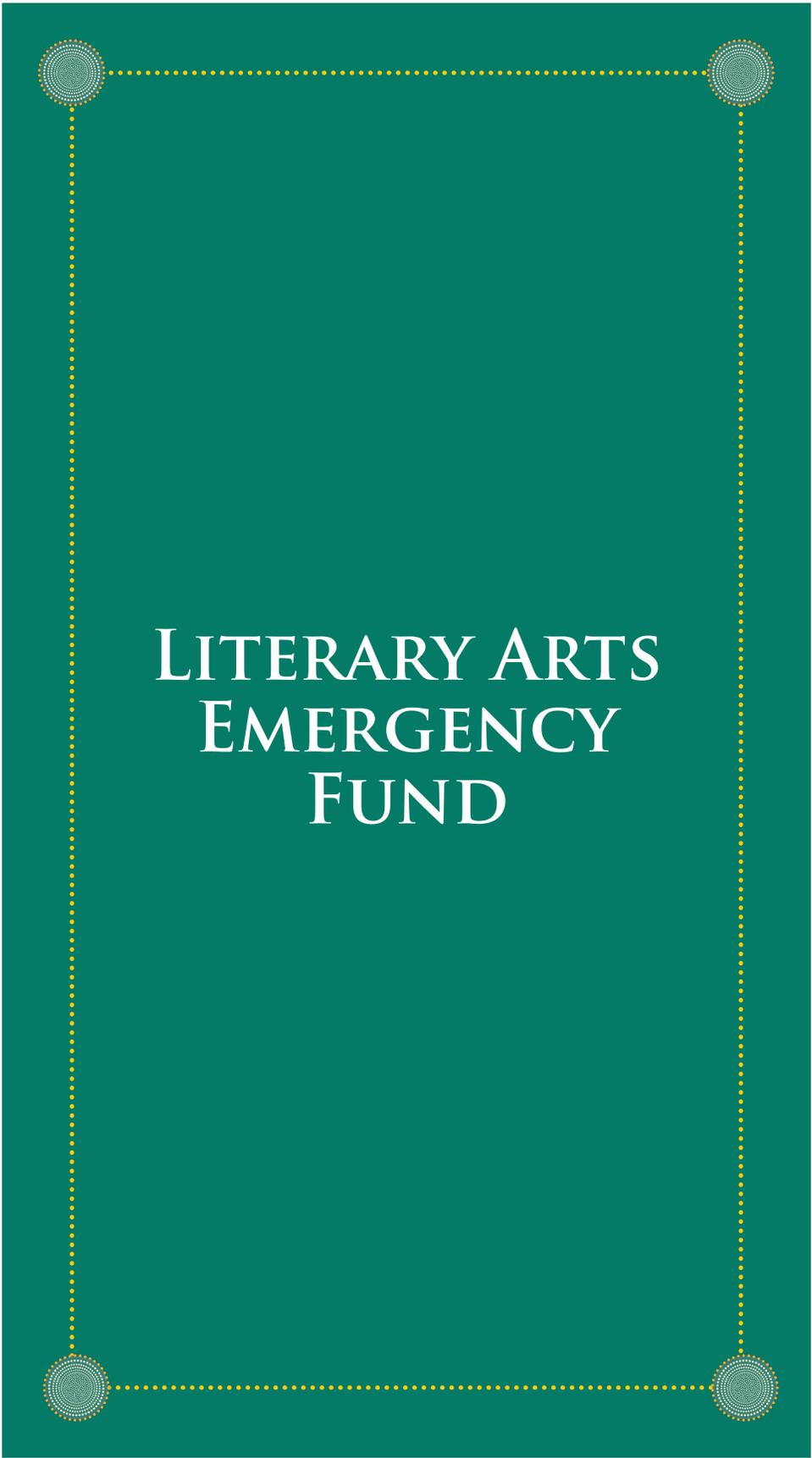
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WITH ELIZABETH HOWARD

The Short Fuse Podcast salutes Dr. Brenda M. Greene and the Center for Black Literature for expanding, broadening and enriching our understanding of Black literature.

Short Fuse Podcasts, hosted and produced by Elizabeth Howard, are conversations with artists, writers, musicians and others whose art reveals our communities through their lens and stirs us to seek change.

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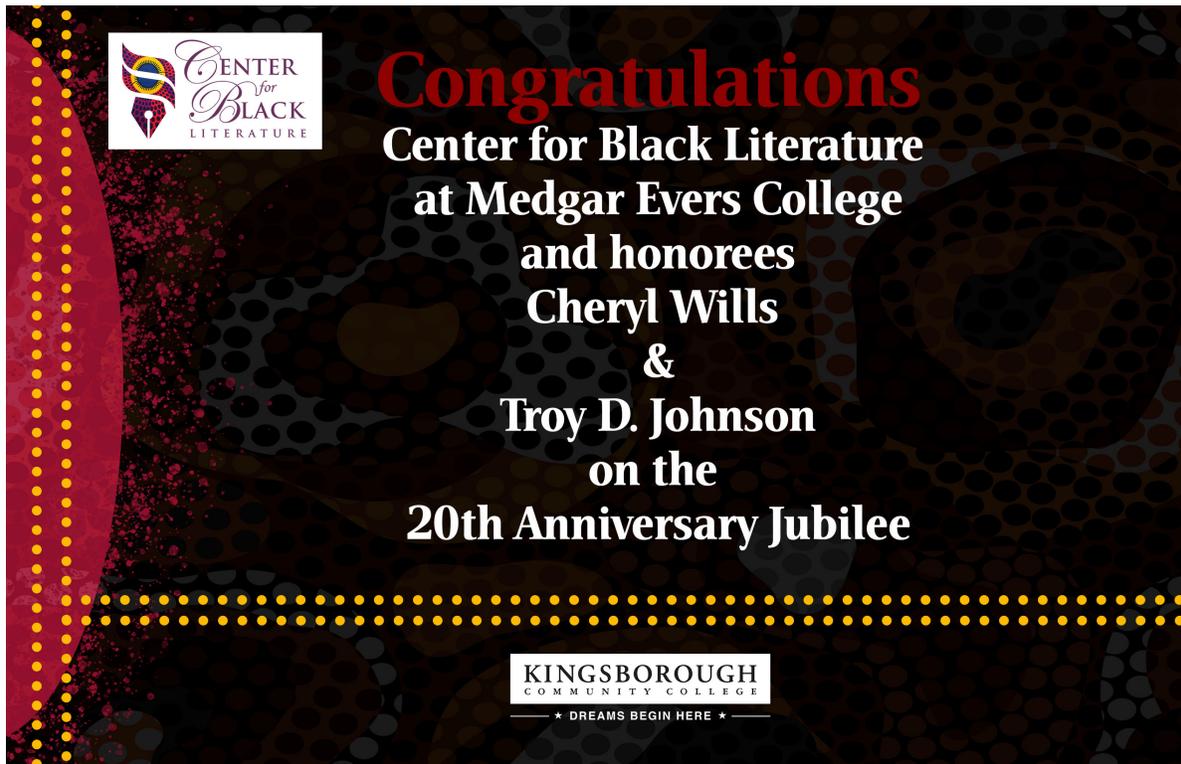
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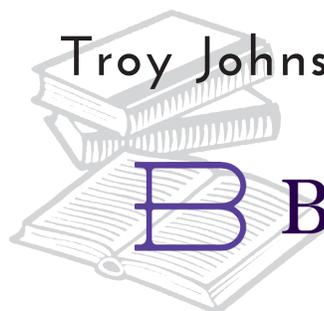
To apply, contact - Charles Touhey, Pine West Plaza #2, Washington Avenue Extension, Albany, New York.

Email: CharlesTouhey@hotmail.com
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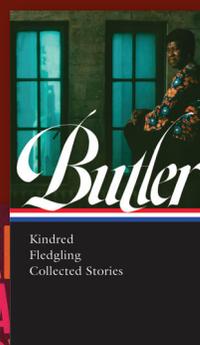
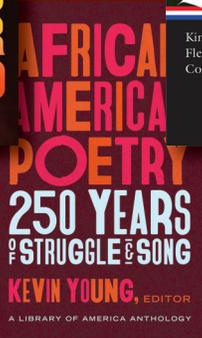
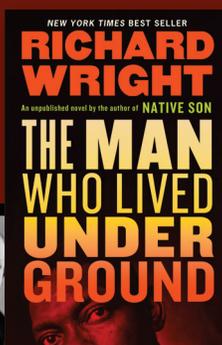
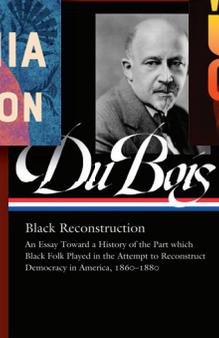
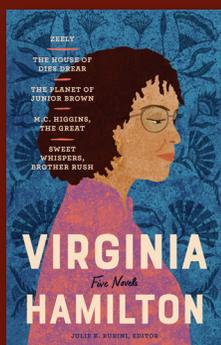
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www.artsfuse.org



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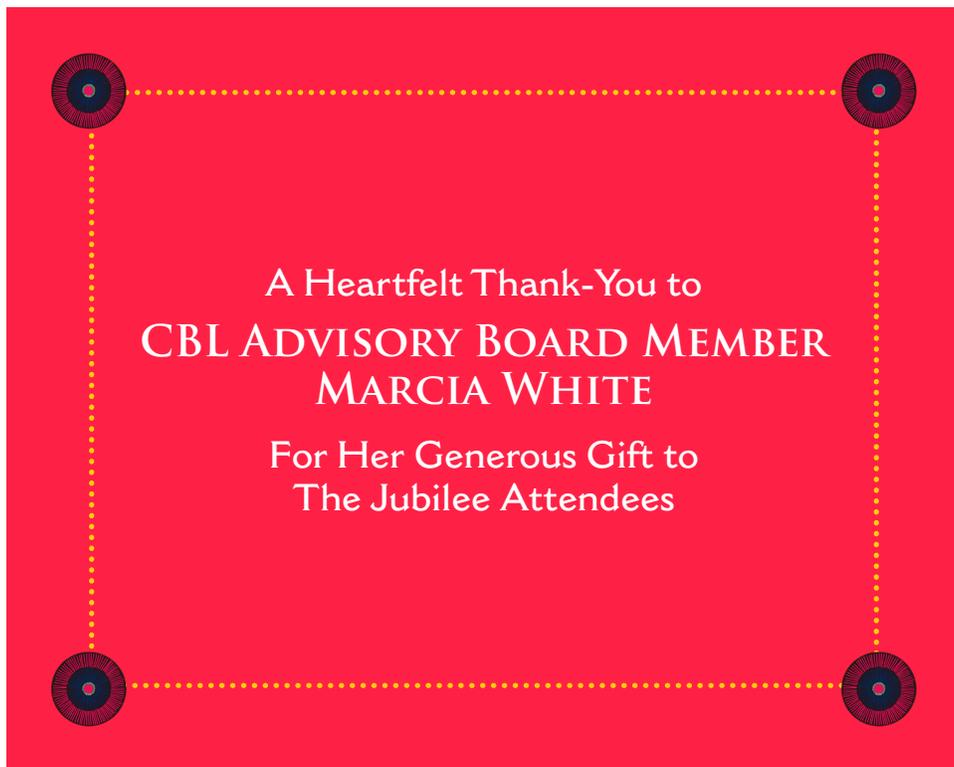




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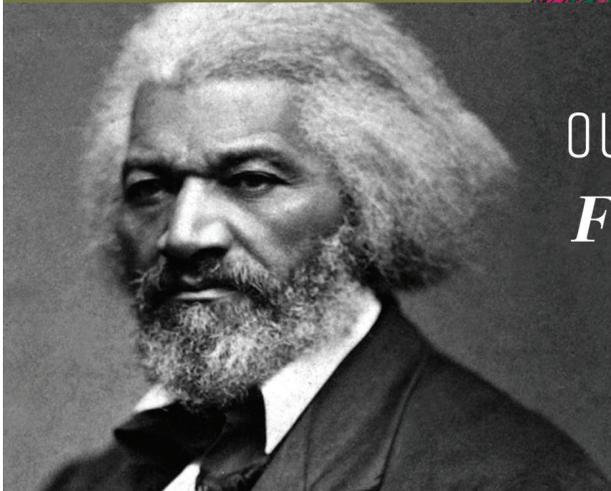
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