



Diasporic Visions
**Celebrating Black
Speculative Fiction**

**NATIONAL BLACK WRITERS CONFERENCE
BIENNIAL SYMPOSIUM**

March 31 to April 1, 2023

Medgar Evers College, CUNY | Brooklyn, NY 11225

John Oliver Killens

Founder, National Black Writers Conference
Est. 1986

Brenda M. Greene

Conference Director, National Black Writers Conference
Founder, Center for Black Literature



LETTER FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Six months ago, the Center for Black Literature presented a stellar affair to celebrate its 20th anniversary. Kamala Harris, the Vice President of the United States, took time to share, in writing, her greetings and congratulations for this milestone occasion.

We remain honored that she thanked the “Black writers, activists, teachers, artists, and students...” who do the important work of uplifting the stories of Black people. We gladly reprint that letter of support here.



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 Conference Attendees:

Welcome to the 2023 **National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, Diasporic Visions: Celebrating Black Speculative Fiction**. In 2019, I attended a forum on *Afrofuturism and the Future* at the Association of Writing and Writing Programs Conference (AWP). Our honoree Sheree Renée Thomas and the scholar Dr. Reynaldo Anderson were participants in the forum. It struck me how far we have come in this field. Two experts on Afrofuturism were leading a forum at the AWP and discussing its presence and future in literature and in writing classrooms. Subsequent to that, the College Language Association (CLA) focused on the theme: *Afrofuturism: Diasporic Visions* for its 2021 Conference. And in 2009, the Center for Black Literature (CBL), recognizing the rising interest and significance of *Black Speculative Fiction*, hosted a Symposium on the life and work of the award-winning Black science fiction writer Octavia Butler. The audience was full. Writers, scholars, readers, students, and the general public were eager to read the stories and novels of Octavia Butler, to examine her work from a scholarly perspective, and to create their own speculative fiction stories, novels, plays, and poems.



Interest in Black Speculative Fiction is definitely growing and exploding in print, film, music, videos, and the media. This landscape provides a context for the Symposium theme: **Diasporic Visions: Celebrating Black Speculative Fiction**. As far back as Martin R. Delany in his “Blake” stories, and continuing with Samuel R. Delaney, Charles R. Saunders, N.K. Jemisin, Nalo Hopkinson, and (Tananarive Due and Steven Barnes, two previous Octavia Butler award honorees), as well as our honorees, Sheree Renée Thomas and Jewel Parker Rhodes, *Black Speculative Fiction* is a genre that has made significant inroads in the literary community and popular culture. *Wakanda*, *Get Out*, *Us*, and *Lovecraft Country* represent how this genre is transforming the film and television industry. On the rise, it encompasses and blurs the genres of magical realism, futurism, horror, fantasy, paranormal, and mythology. These imaginative stories enable writers to create alternative and futuristic worlds, narratives rooted in traditional beliefs and spirituality, and stories that center the Black experience and raise questions about issues such as history, colonialism, racism, identity, gender, and future technologies.

I hope that you come away from this Symposium inspired by the stories created by Black speculative fiction writers, gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and range of Black Speculative Fiction, and engage with our writers, scholars, students, literary professionals, and the community. Walter Mosley once said, “Black Speculative Fiction” is a natural genre for creating texts depicting the experiences and stories of Blacks of African ancestry. This year’s Symposium will hopefully affirm that for you.

Our pre-symposium youth workshops are on the theme of *Wakanda*. Day One of the Symposium features a virtual forum on speculative fiction scholarship and an in-person forum with our elders who are creating Black speculative fiction stories. Day Two features roundtable discussions, a conversation with the two honorees, and the Awards Program.

Please support our writers by purchasing their books onsite at **Sistah’s Uptown Book Store** and online at www.aalbc.com. There will also be an onsite literary and cultural marketplace.

Thank you for supporting our writers and for participating in this historic event

Sincerely,

Brenda M. Greene

Brenda M. Greene
Director, National Black Writers Conference
Founder and Executive Director, Center for Black Literature, Medgar Evers College, CUNY



Dear Conference Participants:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2023 National Black Writers Biennial Symposium: *Diasporic Visions: Celebrating Black Speculative Fiction*, as we celebrate national black writers for their publications. They educate, brighten, and lift the hearts of both young and older readers.

Medgar Evers College, a College birthed out of community advocacy with social justice in its DNA, is dedicated to creating opportunities for all who connect with us in the aspiration of a brighter future. The National Black Writers Conference provides such an opportunity.

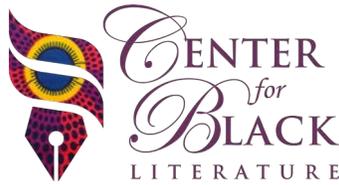
A hearty congratulations to the honorees on being recognized for their passion of writing: Sheree Renée Thomas, an award-winning short story writer and poet, and Jewell Parker Rhodes, an American bestselling novelist and educator.

In closing, thanks to Dr. Brenda Greene for the amazing work that she and her team have done in planning the 2023 National Black Writers Biennial Symposium and for preserving the history of the conference, at Medgar Evers College.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Ramsey".

Patricia Ramsey, Ph.D.
President



Founded in 2002 by 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 (ROLL), 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 over 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.

PREVIOUS NBWC CONFERENCES AND HONOREES

Presented by The Center For Black Literature

• **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;
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.



PREVIOUS NBWC CONFERENCES AND HONOREES

Presented by The Center For Black Literature

- **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. Co-Presented by AKILA WORKSONGS
- **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** National Black Writers Conference, “The Beautiful Struggle: Black Writers Lighting the Way.” Honorees: Herb Boyd, Eddie Glaude, Jr., Tracy K. Smith and Jacqueline Woodson.
- **March 2023** National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium (NBWC2023), “Diasporic Visions: Celebrating Black Speculative Fiction.” Honorees: Jewell Parker Rhodes and Sheree Renée Thomas.



**The Community Council
For Medgar Evers College, Inc.**

Salutes

*The Center for Black Literature
at Medgar Evers College, CUNY*

upon the occasion of their

*2023 National Black Writers Conference
Biennial Symposium*

And, we congratulate this year's honorees

*Sheree Renée Thomas
and
Jewell Parker Rhodes*

Over 50 years of Service to the College and the Community





SHEREE RENÉE THOMAS

is a *New York Times* bestselling, two-time World Fantasy Award-winning author and editor. A 2022 Hugo Award Finalist, she is the author of *Nine Bar Blues: Stories from an Ancient Future*, a Locus, Ignyte, and World Fantasy Finalist, Marvel's *Black Panther: Panther's Rage* novel, an adaptation of the legendary comics, and she collaborated with Janelle Monáe on the story, "Timebox Altar(ed)" in *The Memory Librarian and Other Stories of Dirty Computer*. She co-edited *Africa Risen: A New Era of Speculative Fiction*, a NAACP Image Award nominee, and is the Editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, founded in 1949.

Sheree lives in her hometown, Memphis, Tennessee, near a mighty river and a pyramid.



JEWELL PARKER RHODES

is the author of six adult novels: *Voodoo Dreams*, *Magic City*, *Douglass' Women*, *Season, Moon*, and *Hurricane*, as well as the memoir *Porch Stories: A Grandmother's Guide to Happiness*, and two writing guides: *Free Within Ourselves: Fiction Lessons for Black Authors* and *The African American Guide to Writing and Publishing Non-Fiction*. Jewell is also the author of seven books for youth including the *New York Times* bestsellers *Ghost Boys* and *Black Brother, Black Brother*. She has won the American Book Award, the Black Caucus of the American Library Award for Literary Excellence, and the Jane Addams Peace Association Book Award.

Jewell is the Founding Artistic Director of the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing and Narrative Studies Professor and Virginia G. Piper Endowed Chair at Arizona State University. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Carnegie-Mellon University. She enjoys teaching, walking her Toy Aussie Sheepdogs, theater, dancing, and music. Born in Pittsburgh, she now lives in Seattle.



The Center for Fiction Congratulates
Sheree Renée Thomas & Jewell Parker Rhodes



“All that you touch, You Change.
All that you Change, Changes
you. The only lasting truth Is
Change.”

Octavia E. Butler
Parable of the Sower

*A Home for Readers and Writers
in Brooklyn and Beyond*

Bookstore • Writers Studio • Library
Literary Events • Reading Groups
Writing Workshops • Café & Bar

centerforfiction.org | @center4fiction

Pre-Symposium Events

John Oliver Killens Reading Series Thursday, March 16, 2023

Kindred: An Exploration of Slavery's Legacy

A Conversation about Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, featuring **Courtney Lee-Mitchell** (who served as executive producer for *Kindred* on FX), writers and scholars from Medgar Evers College: **Mudiwa Pettus, Tracey Squires,** and **Cathie Wright-Lewis,** and moderator, **Donna Hill.**

6:30 pm to 8:00 pm ET

Edison O. Jackson Auditorium

Special Event

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and the **Center for Black Literature** present

Unlocking the Stories of Our Ancestors: An Interactive Presentation

with Genealogist and Host **Nicka Sewell Smith**

6:30 pm to 8:00 pm ET

Virtual

Center for Black Literature Monthly Book Discussion Wednesday, March 29

Black Sci-Fi Short Stories: Anthology of New and Classic Tales
by **Tia Cross** (Co-editor), **Sandra M. Grayson** (Introduction), and **Temi Oh** (Foreword)

6:30 pm to 8:00 pm ET

Virtual

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Youth ROLL Program

Middle School and High School Program

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Founders Auditorium

Curated by **Mo Beasley**

Primary School Program

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Founders Auditorium

Curated by **Cathie Wright-Lewis**

Poetry Slam Open Mic

Featuring **Medgar Evers College Students**

Co-Presented by the **Office of the Medgar Evers College Dean of Students,**
Office of Student Life, and the **Student Government Association**

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Academic Complex Lobby | 1638 Bedford Avenue

Main Symposium

Friday, March 31 (Virtual)

Hosts: **Mudiwa Pettus** and **Kirsten Mairead Gill**
Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Welcome

10:00 am to 10:15 am ET

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Panel One: Horror & Hauntings

10:15 am to 11:45 am ET

Carlyle Van Thompson

Medgar Evers College, CUNY (NY)

“Richard Wright’s “Between the World and Me” and Jewell Parker Rhodes’
Ghost Boys: Intersecting Racial Violence and Racial Trauma”

Rhonda Jackson Garcia

Lone Star College (TX)

“Not The Mammy You Know: The Subversion of the
Mammy Trope in Horror Portrayals of Black Motherhood”

Julia Mallory

(Founder of Black Mermaids and Senior Poetry Editor for Raising Mothers) and

Hess Love

(MFA Student and Co-Founder of the Chesapeake Conjure Society)

“Magic and Mourning: Special Specters on Screen in the Films *Beloved*, *His House*, and *Nanny*”

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Panel Two: Envisioning New Generations

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm ET

Pheolyn Allen

Pennsylvania State University (PA)

“Now We Rise: The Affirmation of Black Rage and Rebellion in Tomi Adeyemi’s Legacy of Orisha Series”

Karima K. Jeffrey-Legette

Hampton University (VA)

“...and ‘Still We Rise,’ or Do We?: The Promise and Problems of
Supergirls of African-Descent in Popular Contemporary American Culture”

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Panel Three: Speculative Dynamics

1:30 pm to 3:00 pm ET

Chamara Moore

Queens College, CUNY (NY)

“Through Their Eyes: The Visionary Promise of Black Feminist Speculative Fiction”

Doñela C. Wright

San Francisco State University (CA)

In Conversation with the Sacred within Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower*

Walter Gordon

Stanford University (CA)

“Logistics/Quest: Narratives of Speculative Circulation in *Nova* and *Invisible Things*”

Main Symposium

Friday, March 31

Dr. Edith Rock Writing Workshop for Elders:

A Presentation

3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Edison O. Jackson Auditorium
Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Wild Seeds Retreat for Writers of Color Reunion

6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Main Symposium

Saturday, April 1

Host: **Wallace Ford**

Associate Professor, Medgar Evers College, CUNY

11:00 am – 11:05 am

Welcome by **Dr. Antoinette Coleman**

Provost and Senior Vice President
Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Special Remarks by **Brenda M. Greene**

Founder and Executive Director
Center for Black Literature

11:10 am – 12:30 pm

Diasporic Visions: The Evolution of Black Speculative Fiction from Print to Film

Jewelle Gomez, Reynaldo Anderson,
and **Rasheedah Phillips**

Moderator: **L. Penelope**

Speakers will discuss Black speculative fiction as an umbrella term for speculative texts with an emphasis on the people and culture of the African Diaspora. The discussion will explore how the genre includes science fiction, fantasy, magical realism, and Afrofuturism. The focus will be on the genre's origins, trends, and emergence in print and films.

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Black Speculative Fiction's Impact on Popular Culture

Tim Fielder, Jesse J. Holland, Christine Taylor-Butler,
and **Ytasha Womack**

Moderator: **Jarvis Sheffield**

Sponsored by the **Black Science Fiction Society**

Speakers will discuss the explosion of Black Speculative Fiction in popular culture, film, music, comic books, politics, video games, and literature. They will explore the reasons for this explosion, examine the impact of the internet and social media on Black Speculative Fiction, and reflect on how their writing represents the intersection of popular culture and speculative fiction.

Host: **Lindamichelle Baron**

Associate Professor, York College, CUNY

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

The Presence of Africa in Black Speculative Fiction

Tananarive Due, Anita Kopacz and **Clarence Haynes**

Moderator: **Mo Beasley**

Speakers will discuss how Black speculative fiction centered on Africa features African protagonists and imagines new technologies. Also, they will explore how the genre blends spirituality and superpowers, envisions new worlds, and moves across geographical boundaries. Additionally, they will explore the themes in African-centered speculation fiction from the perspective of their own writing.

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

A Conversation with NBWC2023 Honorees

Sheree Renée Thomas and **Jewell Parker Rhodes**

Moderator: **Reynaldo Anderson**

Honorees Sheree Renée Thomas and Jewel Parker Rhodes will discuss their journey in writing and publishing Black Speculative Fiction, the overarching themes and emerging trends in Black Speculative Fiction, and the racial, historical, social, political, and Afrofuturistic influences and perspectives on their work.

6:15 pm - 6:30 pm

Silent Auction Special Event

Host: **Novella Ford** of the Schomburg Center
for Research in Black Culture

6:30 pm - 7:15 pm

The Octavia E. Butler Award Program

Honoring **Sheree Renée Thomas**

and **Jewell Parker Rhodes**

Special Remarks by **Dr. Patricia Ramsey**
President, Medgar Evers College, CUNY



**The Center for Black Literature thanks
Key Bank for their support of the
2023 National Black Writers Conference
Biennial Symposium.**



Reynaldo Anderson

currently serves as an Associate Professor of Africology and African American Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Reynaldo is currently the Executive Director and co-founder of the Black Speculative Arts Movement (BSAM), an international network

of artists, intellectuals, creatives, and activists. He is also a founding member of A.R.T. 2063, (Africans Rising Together). He is the co-editor of the following anthologies and journals, *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness* and *The Black Speculative Arts Movement: Black Futurity, Art+Design* (Lexington Books, 2015, 2019), *Cosmic Underground: A Grimoire of Black Speculative Discontent* (Cedar Grove Publishing, 2018), *Black Lives, Black Politics, Black Futures, a special issue of TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* (2018), and *When is Wakanda: Afrofuturism and Dark Speculative Futurity* (The Journal of Futures Studies, 2019). He is also the author of numerous articles on Africana Studies and Communication studies and helped conceive the joint BSAM and NY LIVE Arts Curating the “End of the World” online exhibitions (2020-2021). Reynaldo recently served as a member of the curatorial council for Carnegie Hall’s Afrofuturism festival in 2022. He has presented papers in areas of communications, Africana studies, Afrofuturism, and critical theory in the US and abroad.



Mo Beasley, a Universal Man in the world of theater and performance, is an award-winning poet, published writer, arts educator, and activist. In 2006, the New York Daily News heralded him as one of “50 Unsung New York Heroes,” citing his selfless work uplifting the arts

for youth and adults alike. Beasley earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre from Howard University. The Boston-born, Miami Beach-based artist sees Art as a Leader In Social Evolution. AUTHOR: *Be a Father to Your Child* (Counterpoint Press); *No Good Nigga Bluez* (Scripted Linguistics). PLAYWRIGHT: *Iced Out Shackled and Chained...* (National Black Theater Festival); *No Good Nigga Bluez* (NY International Fringe Festival). ARTS EDUCATOR | PUBLIC SPEAKER: The National Black Writers Conference, CatalystCon, Families United for Racial and Economic Equality, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Penn State Black Lawyers Association. FEATURED POET: Blue Note, Nuyorican Poets Café, BAMcafe, Joe’s Pub, Center, Bowery Poetry Club, and the American Museum of Natural History. PRODUCER: Mo Beasley’s *UrbanErotika* and *LoveSuites*. STAGE MANAGER: Broadway’s *Bring In Da Noise/Bring In Da Funk*; Off-Broadway’s *Blue Man Group*, *Boys Choir of Harlem*.



Tananarive Due

(tah-nah-nah-REEVE doo) is an award-winning author who teaches Black Horror and Afrofuturism at UCLA. She is an executive producer on Shudder’s groundbreaking documentary *Horror Noire: A History of Black Horror*. She and her husband/

collaborator, Steven Barnes, wrote “A Small Town” for Season 2 of Jordan Peele’s “The Twilight Zone” on Paramount Plus, and two segments of Shudder’s anthology film *Horror Noire*. They also co-wrote their upcoming Black Horror graphic novel *The Keeper*, illustrated by Marco Finnegan. Due and Barnes co-host a podcast, “Lifewriting: Write for Your Life!”

A leading voice in Black speculative fiction for more than 20 years, Due has won an American Book Award, an NAACP Image Award, and a British Fantasy Award, and her writing has been included in best-of-the-year anthologies. Her books include *Ghost Summer: Stories*, *My Soul to Keep*, and *The Good House*. She and her late mother, civil rights activist Patricia Stephens Due, co-authored *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights*. She and her husband live with their son, Jason.



Tim Fielder

is an Illustrator, concept designer, cartoonist, and animator born in Tupelo, Mississippi, and raised in Clarksdale, Mississippi. He has a lifelong love of Visual Afrofuturism, Pulp entertainment, and action films. He holds other Afrofuturists

such as Samuel R Delany, Octavia Butler, Pedro Bell, and Overton Loyd as major influences. He is known for the graphic novel, *INFINITUM: An Afrofuturist Tale*, published by HarperCollins Amistad in 2021 and the Glyph Award winning ‘Matty’s Rocket.’





Kirsten Mairead Gill

(she/her) is a scholar and theorist of moving image media and a PhD candidate in art history at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is a current Writing Across the Curriculum Fellow at Medgar Evers College, and a fellow at the Center for Place, Culture,

and Politics. Her dissertation, *Movement Image: Black Freedom in Experimental Film and Video, 1965-85*, recovers a range of experiments in post-war cinema to argue that the sociality of moving image media was dramatically re-imagined in the light of Black liberation movements from the 1960s-1980s. The project asks what possibilities exist for solidarity, and for the re-making of social relations in, around, and by the cinema. Kirsten was Mellon Curatorial Fellow at Dia Art Foundation from 2019-2020 and has held positions at the ICA Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She has presented projects at Dia (with the Hammer Museum and Electronic Arts Intermix), the James Gallery and the Center for the Humanities (New York), Wendy's Subway, Biquini Wax EPS (Mexico City), and Ulises, Space 1026, Little Berlin, and Grizzly Grizzly in Philadelphia. Also an educator, Kirsten has taught classes in art history, photography, and film studies at the New York City College of Technology and City College of New York.



Jewelle Gomez.

(Cabo Verdean/Wampanoag/loway; she/her), is a novelist, poet, and playwright. Her eight books include four collections of poetry and the first Black Lesbian vampire novel, THE GILDA STORIES. In print for more than 30 years, it was recently optioned

by Cheryl Dunye ("Lovecraft Country") for a TV mini-series.

Her work has appeared in numerous anthologies including: "Red Indian Road West," "Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora," "Stories for Skip: A Tribute to Samuel R Delany," and "Luminescent Threads: Connections to Octavia Butler."

Her plays, "Waiting for Giovanni" about James Baldwin and "Leaving the Blues," about Alberta Hunter, were produced in San Francisco and in New York City.

Her recent collection of poetry, "Still Water," was published in June 2022. Her new play, "Unpacking in Ptown," will premiere at New Conservatory Theater, (SF) in Spring of 2024.

In addition to two Lambda Literary Awards she was a 2020 recipient of a Legacy Award from Horror Writers of America.

She was formerly a grant maker for the NY State Council on the Arts as well as the SF Arts Commission, and Horizons Foundation in San Francisco.



DaMaris B. Hill

Hill's most recent book, *Breath Better Spent: Living Black Girlhood*, is deemed "urgent" and "luminous" in a starred Publisher's Weekly review. Her first book, *A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing*, is a searing and powerful narrative-in-verse that

bears witness to American women of color burdened by incarceration. It was an Amazon #1 Best Seller in African American Poetry and a Publishers Weekly Top 10 History Title for the season. Her digital work includes *Shut Up In My Bones*, a poem that uses "remix/pastiche, intertextuality, and irony as strategies of identity formation to remember and honor a specific cultural past, while at the same time working to construct visions of a better future."

Similar to her creative process, Hill's scholarly research is interdisciplinary. Hill's other books include *The Fluid Boundaries of Suffrage and Jim Crow: Staking Claims in the American Heartland*, the chapbook, \Vi-zə-bəl\ \Tek-s-chərs\ (*Visible Textures*). Hill is a Professor of Creative Writing, English, and African American Studies at the University of Kentucky.



Jesse J. Holland

is an award-winning author, journalist and television personality. He is the author of *Black Panther: Who Is the Black Panther?*, a novel, and the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens - Finn's Story* young adult novel. He also is the editor and one of the authors featured

in *Black Panther: Tales of Wakanda* anthology, and the upcoming *Captain America: Sam Wilson* anthology from Marvel and Titan Books. He also wrote the classic nonfiction books *The Invisibles: Untold Stories of African American Slaves in the White House* and *Black Men Built the Capitol: Discovering African American History In and Around Washington, D.C.* Jesse also currently guest hosts C-SPAN's *Washington Journal* while working as an opinion columnist for MSNBC.com. He is currently writing and producing his first documentary, as well as working on a new anthology, a new nonfiction book and his first original novel. Jesse was a longtime Race & Ethnicity writer for The Associated Press, as well as serving as a White House, Supreme Court and Congressional reporter. He was one of the few reporters to be a credentialed member of all three members of the major Washington press corps. He is currently an assistant professor at the School of Media & Public Affairs at George Washington University.



Anita Kopacz

is the author of the Simon & Schuster fiction novel, *Shallow Waters*. It is the second title that Charlemagne the God released on his imprint, Black Privilege Publishing. Anita is the former Editor-in-Chief of *Heart & Soul* Magazine and Managing Editor

of *BeautyCents* Magazine. She is an award-winning writer, a Spiritual Psychologist and a certified Tantra coach with a passion to see people thrive. Anita also created the nonprofit, Zero F's Given to raise awareness and help victimized and disenfranchised populations heal from sexual trauma, find their voice, and reclaim their power. She has helped thousands of victims through her work with Zero F's Given and being on the board for the Center for Safety and Change.

Through leading retreats around the world with The Goddess Wisdom Council, working with private clients and storytelling, Anita fulfills her intention to awaken the divine simplicity, pleasure and joy in her life and others.



Cathie Wright-Lewis

Brooklyn Speculative Fiction author Cathie Wright-Lewis penned and published *Maurya's Seed- Why Hope Lives Behind Project Walls*, *Passion's Pride - Return to the Dawning*, *Mama Relly* and *Mama Relly's Lessons*

children's book series and a host of poetry anthologies and short stories. Her allegorical Afrofuturistic works both uncover the history of African Americans in New York City, honors the African ancestors who built the city and those who fought for equality amid centuries of disenfranchisement and massacres.

Written with her students in mind, Wright-Lewis strategically embedded core knowledge of language skills that ordinarily prevent urban students from mastering language and writing skills within her texts. She also uses language and culture that connect students of color and invite them on journeys about their lives.

For over 35 years, Wright-Lewis served Brooklyn youth, adults, and teachers as a high school English teacher, mentor, UFT Teacher-trainer, and English Professor. She continues to serve students through Medgar Evers College's Center for Black Literature as program director of Re-envisioning Our Lives through Literature (ROLL) and as Executive Director of her non-profit, Power in the Pen Writing Workshop Inc.



Leslye Penelope

has been writing since she could hold a pen and loves getting lost in the worlds in her head. Her debut novel *Song of Blood & Stone* was chosen as one of *TIME* Magazine's 100 Best Fantasy Books of All Time. The novel also won the inaugural

award for Best Self-Published Fiction from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association before it was picked up for publication by St. Martin's Press.

She was born in the Bronx, just after the birth of hip hop, but left before she could acquire an accent. Equally left and right-brained, she studied film production at Howard University and minored in computer science. This led to a graduate degree in multimedia and a career in website development. She's also an award-winning independent filmmaker, co-founded a literary magazine, and sometimes dreams in HTML.

Leslye is an alumna of VONA/Voices and the Hurston/Wright Writers Workshop. She has spoken and taught at conferences and festivals around the country, including the National Book Festival, Baltimore Book Festival, Romance Writers of America, Writers Digest Annual & Novel Writing Conferences, and the Historical Novel Society.

She hosts the *My Imaginary Friends* podcast and lives in Maryland with her husband and their furry dependents.



Deidre Hollman

is a scholar and educator with over twenty years of experience engaging teachers and teens in the study of history, art, and culture. She served as Director of Education and Exhibitions at

the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (a division of the New York Public Library) for fifteen years where she created and sustained innovative programs such as the Junior Scholars Program, the Teen Curators Program, the Black History 360° Summer Education Institute, and the Black Comic Book Festival. A graduate of Princeton University (BA in Art History), Bank Street College (MSEd in Museum Education & Leadership), and Teachers College (EdM in Social Studies Education), she is currently a doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research focuses on critical social studies curriculum and teaching; historical, racial, and visual literacies; cultural studies; and speculative thought in education. She is an educational consultant specializing in culturally relevant and sustaining curriculum, pedagogy, and instruction for museums, cultural institutions, community-based organizations, and schools serving grades PK to College. She is also the founder of the Black Comics Collective, a cultural, educational, and digital forum for connecting comic

creators of color with the youth and communities in New York City. Deirdre and The Black Comics Collective are represented by Serendipity Literary Agency.



Rasheedah Phillips

is a queer housing advocate, parent, writer, interdisciplinary artist, and cultural producer who uses digital projects, zines, short film, archival practices, experimental non-fiction, speculative fiction, printmaking, performance, social practice,

installation and creative research to explore the construct of time, temporalities, and community futurisms through a Black futurist cultural lens and experience. As a housing advocate and attorney, Phillips has led various housing policy campaigns that resulted in significant legislative changes, including a right to counsel for tenants in Philadelphia, and the Renter’s Access Act, one of the strongest laws in the nation to address blanket ban eviction polices having a disparate impact on renters of color. Phillips’ writing and artwork has appeared in The Funambulist Magazine, Temple Civil and Political Rights Journal, Next City, Generocity, Fringe Arts Festival Blog, Law and Political Economy blog, Critical Analysis of Law Journal, e-flux Architecture, Flash Art Magazine, Philadelphia Inquirer, Recess Arts blog, Philadelphia Weekly, Atlanta BlackStar, the books Keywords for Radicals and Organize Your Own, along with other books and publications. Phillips is the founder of The AfroFuturist Affair, founding member of Metropolarity Queer Speculative Fiction Collective, co-founder of Black Quantum Futurism, co-creator of the award winning Community Futures Lab, and creator of The TimeZone Protocols, Black Women Temporal Portal, and Black Time Belt projects. As part of BQF and as a solo artist, Phillips has been awarded a United States Artists fellowship, Arts at CERN Artists Residency, Vera List Center Fellowship, A Blade of Grass Fellowship, Velocity Fund Fellowship, among others, and has exhibited, presented at, been in residence, and performed at Institute of Contemporary Art London, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Serpentine Gallery, Red Bull Arts, Chicago Architecture Biennial, Akademie Solitude, Manifesta 13 Biennale, documenta fifteen, and more.



Wayetu Moore

is the author of She Would Be King, released by Graywolf Press in September 2018. Her memoir, The Dragons, The Giant, The Women was also released with Graywolf on June 2, 2020. She is the recipient of the 2019 Lannan Literary Fellowship for Fiction and the 2022 William Saroyan Prize for Nonfiction.

She Would Be King was named a best book of 2018 by Publishers Weekly, Booklist & Entertainment Weekly. The novel was a Sarah Jessica Parker Book Club selection, a BEA Buzz Panel Book, a #1 Indie Next Pick and a finalist for the Hurston/Wright Award. The Dragons, The Giant, The Women was a 2020 New York Times Notable Book, Time Magazine 10 Best Nonfiction Books of 2020, Publishers Weekly Top 5 Nonfiction Books of 2020, was longlisted for the ALA Andrew Carnegie medal for excellence in nonfiction, and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Moore is a graduate of Howard University, University of Southern California and Columbia University.



Jarvis Sheffield

is a proud father, husband, member of Lake Providence Missionary Baptist Church and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. He has been involved in various forms of multimedia and education for over 30 years. He has done graphic design, web design, video, animation, multimedia, game

design, VR/AR and 3D Printing. He has authored technical articles for various publications and taught seminars, workshops, training, and classes on S.T.E.A.M. technology, and education. He holds a BS degree in Interdisciplinary studies from Tennessee State University and earned a Master’s in Education from Trevecca Nazarene University. He holds leadership positions as:

Coordinator of the Tennessee State University Media Centers

Facilitates the Tennessee State University’s MakerSpace Lab

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NBWC2023 PARTICIPANTS



Christine Taylor-Butler

is the author of more than ninety books including the speculative YA/MG series, *The Lost Tribes* (Move Books). A graduate of MIT, she holds degrees in both civil engineering and art & design. She has served as a

literary awards judge for PEN America and the Society of Midland Authors and was named Toastmaster for the 2021 World Fantasy Convention. Christine was elected Director-at-Large for Science Fiction Writers Association (SFWA) and is the Diversity and Inclusion officer for NASFIC 2023 (Winnipeg, Manitoba, CA). She lives in Kansas City, MO.



Ytasha L. Womack

is an award-winning author, director, independent scholar, and dance therapist. Her book *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci Fi & Fantasy Culture* is a 2014 Locus Awards Nonfiction Finalist. Ytasha lectures on *Afrofuturism* and the imagination for audiences

around the world and was a co-curator of Carnegie Hall's *Afrofuturism* Festival in Spring 2022. She's featured in the documentary *Afrofuturism: An Origin Story* produced in partnership with the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Ytasha was an inaugural resident for Black Rock Senegal helmed by artist Kehende Wiley in Dakar and showcasing her zine *Liquid* at the 2022 Dakar Biennial. Her book *Black Panther: A Cultural Exploration* for Marvel Entertainment debuts in October 2023 (Quarto) and her debut graphic novel *Blak Kube*, illustrated by Tanna Tucker, debuts in Fall 2024. Ytasha's other works include the sci fi novel *Rayla 2212*, *Spaceship in Bronzeville*, *Post Black*, and *Beats, Rhymes and Life*.



Scholarly Paper Presenters



Pheolyn Allen

is MA/Dual-titled PhD student in English Literature and African-American and Diaspora Studies at Penn State. He holds a BA in Media Arts from the University of North Texas. Currently, he works with Penn State's Center for Black Digital Research, serving as a creative producer and director for their various media and broadcasting projects, and he is a 2023 Junior Fellow with the Library of Congress's Archive of Public Broadcasting. His research areas include Afrofuturism, utopic formations of Blackness, Black LGBTQ+ literature, and literary works of the Harlem Renaissance, the Gay Liberation Movement, the AIDS epidemic, and the Black LGBTQ+ Ballroom community.



Walter Gordon

is the Kerr Family Provostial Fellow in the Department of English at Stanford University, where he studies the links among race, literature, energy, and ecology, particularly in relation to labor and modernity. Most recently, Walter served as a NEH-Mellon Fellow for Digital Publication and as the 2021-22 Postdoctoral Fellow in the Public Energy Humanities at the University of Alberta. He is currently working on two monographs: *Prime Movers: Energy and Modernity in African American Literature*, which tracks the overlapping cultural legacies of King Coal and Jim Crow and highlights other entanglements of race and energy across the 20th century, and *Logistics/Quest*, which demonstrates the historical and contemporary connections between logistics and the narrative form of the quest.



Rhonda Jackson Joseph

is a Stoker Award™ nominated, Texas based writer who earned her MFA in Writing Popular Fiction from Seton Hill University. A lifelong horror fan and writer of many things, she joyously discovered and embraced writing in the academic arena about three important aspects of her life: horror, Black femininity, and popular culture. She has had works published in various venues, including the Halloween issue of *Southwest Review* and *The Streaming of Hill House: Essays on the Haunting Netflix Series*. R.J. is also an instructor at The Speculative Fiction Academy and a co-host of the Genre Blackademia podcast.



Karima K. Jeffrey-Legette

is associate professor of English at Hampton University, with degrees from Swarthmore College (BA with Honors), Lehman College-CUNY (MA), and Howard University (PhD). She has served as interim chair of the English and Foreign Languages Department, Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator, UNCF/Mellon Programs Coordinator, ETS-AP Pre-Testing Campus Coordinator; and Certifying Campus Advisor for the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, working closely with the Honors College and International Office.



Hess Jones

is an archivist, ethnoecologist, storyteller, healing artist, poet, and playwright. They are currently an MFA candidate in Creative Writing at Wilkes University and pursuing certification as a Master Naturalist. As a co-founder of the Chesapeake Conjure Society, Hess' creative and community work as a Hoodoo historian lives at the crossroads of culture and environment. Their work is rooted in advocating for communal ways of knowing from systemically discredited people through material mutual aid, spiritual liberation praxis, heritage preservation, cosmovision, and place-based practices in the Chesapeake Bay area.



Julia Mallory

Julia Mallory is committed to being a good steward of, and vessel for her ancestors' stories. As a storyteller working with a range of medium from text to textiles, the latest manifestations of Julia's creative work includes mixed media collages, sonic collages, and short stories.

Their work can be found in *Barrelhouse*, the Black Speculative Arts Movement exhibition "Curating the End of the World: RED SPRING", *The Offing*, *Stellium Literary Magazine*, *Sugarcane Magazine*, *Torch Literary Arts*, and elsewhere. Julia is the author of six books, including two children's books and the founder of the creative container, *Black Mermaids*.

Their short, experimental film, *Grief is the Glitch*, debuted in 2022.

Scholarly Paper Presenters



Chamara Moore

"My work examines literature and media through the lens of Black Feminist Cultural Studies. My current book project, *Swapping Heels for Capes: Black Womanhood, Speculative Fiction, and the Black Imaginary* examines how Black writers

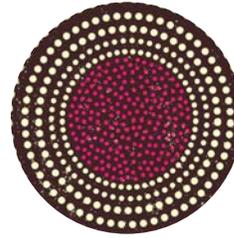
and creators have utilized the power of speculation to blur categorization as we know it, moving through and outside of the parochial confines of the white imaginary to expand our perception of everything from what we make of Blackness and Black womanhood to what Speculative Fiction is. This project explores not only how the Black femme body has been limited and defined under dominant modes of white american canonicity and culture, but how in response Black speculative writing from authors such as Octavia Butler, Colson Whitehead, and N.K. Jemisin have utilized Black womanhood as "objecthood" to bend the genre towards Black liberation."



Mudiwa Pettus

is an Assistant Professor of English Composition and Rhetoric at Medgar Evers College. Her research interests are located at the intersections of rhetorical education, Black intellectual histories, and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century African

American literature. Her writing appears in *Rhetoric Review*, the *Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics*, *Writers: Craft & Context*, and other venues.



Carlyle Van Thompson

"My scholarly work has brought me national and international attention as I attempted to challenge the traditional literary discourses in American and African American literatures. ... I have a passionate and profound understanding of the possibilities associated with

transformation and self-actualization. I embraced a path of life-long intellectual inquiry and in the process I have become a serious scholar and teacher. I have published three scholarly books and eight peer review articles on writers such as Charles Waddell Chesnutt, James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, Toni Morrison, Ernest J. Gaines, Chester Bomar Himes, Richard Wright, and Walter Mosley." *Source: LinkedIn*



Doñela C. Wright

is an Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at San Francisco State University. Following the tradition of other disciplinary scholars, Wright considers herself a scholar-activist, using the discipline of Africana Studies as a framework to seek and promote

social, cultural and sacred justice on behalf of humanity in general, and peoples of Africana descent in particular.

Wright's research interests include diasporic Africana women's literature, literatures of Toni Morrison and Octavia Butler, *Homeplace Theory*, Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs), and decolonized culturally relevant pedagogical tools and strategies. Wright earned her Ph.D. in 2016 from Temple University's Department of Africology & African American Studies. She earned her MA in English and African American Literature in 2008 from North Carolina A&T State University and her BA in Africana Studies in 2005 from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.



Workshop Leader

Eisa Nefertari Ulen is the author of *Crystelle Mourning*, a novel described by *The Washington Post* as “A call for healing in the African American community from generations of hurt and neglect.” Eisa is the recipient of a Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center Fellowship for Young African American Fiction Writers, a Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center Fellowship, and a National Association of Black Journalists Award. Her essays on African American culture have been widely anthologized, most recently “Black Parenting Matters” in *Who Do You Serve? Who Do You Protect?* (Haymarket), which won the Social Justice/Advocacy Award for 2017 from the *School Library Journal's* In the Margins Book Committee. Eisa has contributed to *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Essence*, *Parents*, *The Washington Post*, *Ms. Health*, *Ebony*, *Readers Digest*, *The Huffington Post*, *Pen.org*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Root*, *Truthout*, *The Defenders Online*, *The Grio*, and *Creative Nonfiction*. Eisa graduated from Sarah Lawrence College and earned a master’s degree from Columbia University. She has taught literature at Hunter College and The Pratt Institute, and she teaches fiction writing at Baruch College. A founding member of ringShout: A Place for Black Literature, she lives with her husband and son in Brooklyn.

The Elders

Ebun Adelona is a wise woman with a broad range of knowledge and experience, which spans social science, alternative/complimentary health practices, and research and development of health systems. She has had a long and productive career assisting communities to organize and change health systems so that they are compatible with and service their health needs. With profound respect for the innate healing knowledge of everyone she teaches workshops and guides people to access their inner authority and manifest change in their lives. Dr. Adelona has a bachelor’s degree in nursing education from New York University. A master’s degree as a clinical specialist in psychiatric nursing from Rutgers University and a PhD in anthropology from Columbia University with a specialization in medical and political anthropology.

Diane J. Grazette Collins was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. She earned a BA in English at the University of Hartford in 1995. She earned an MA in English from the University of Connecticut in 1997. She has been a member of the Fulton Art Fair for the past 12 years. She lives with her husband and son in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Shirley V. H. Cooper was born in Kingston, Jamaica, to Violet Huggupp and Oscar Bruce White. Those last two names were melded together by Shirley’s mother, when, in 1949, she migrated to America by way of Panama. Shirley attended Brooklyn College for two years before she pursued her dream to travel the world. That dream came through when she became one of the very first African American women to work for American Airlines as a stewardess. Now retired, Shirley traveled the world when employed by American and Pan Am Airlines.

Joan Corbett was born and bred in Brooklyn, New York, and attended Brooklyn College, where she earned both a BA in education (in 1962) and an MS in counseling. Corbett served the children of Brooklyn’s District 16 for 37 years as a kindergarten teacher and guidance counselor. Now a widow and a proud mother of two children, Tracey and Christopher, and two grandchildren, Austin and Janaya, Joan spends her free time writing and attending movies and plays. She also loves to travel and socialize with her friends.

William Craig was born and bred in Brooklyn, New York, and he attended schools in Brooklyn and New York City. After graduating from Columbia University College of Pharmacy, he commenced his professional career as a pharmacist. As a pharmacist, William’s observation sent him back to school, where he studied naturopathic and allopathic nutrition and completed a postgraduate degree in clinical nutrition. William has been blessed with two children, one who is a social scientist and a published author, residing in Virginia with her family, and the other who is an esquire residing in Brooklyn and working in Manhattan. William’s writing, music, and art have served as a release valve for him, which, given the spiritual and social upheaval we are experiencing today, have served him well, as he looks forward to new and greater beginnings.

Lupe Family is a writer. She has lived in both Clinton Hill and Fort Greene in Brooklyn. She studied and learned from the “University of the Streets” in her many decades of life. Writing about healing through alternative ways like reflexology and yoga is a highlight for her, and she has completed the novel *To Face It: Love & Work*, which is available online through Amazon’s Kindle Direct Press.



The Dr. Edith Rock Writing Workshop for Elders celebrated the launching of its fifth volume of *Tales of Our Times: An Anthology (The Year 2020: Looking Back for Healing, Looking Forward with Hope)* on Wednesday, December 7, 2022, at Medgar Evers College. Contributors who read at the celebration include (left to right): Claudette Joy Spence, Teresa M. Snyder, Glenda Pollard, Shirley V. H. Cooper, Joan Corbett, Ernie Jackson, and Elder Flournoy II.



Elder Flournoy II was born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y., and attended Brooklyn College; after one year there he attended Delhi Agricultural and Technical College in Delhi, N.Y., where he was a single handball champ, second place in doubles, and a member of the wrestling team. He has worked as Yellow Cab driver, a process server, and he attended his first protest of many in Washington, D.C., in 1969. His parents were from Georgia, and his family consisted of three brothers, three sisters, and a famous relative, prizefighter Tommy “Hurricane” Jackson, a Top 10 contender for the heavyweight crown who hailed from Sparta, Georgia.

Ernie Jackson was born in Menifee, Arkansas, and earned a BS from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Jackson moved to New York and attended Teachers College Columbia University, where she earned an MA. A retired teacher who worked for the New York City Board of Education, Jackson loves to write, garden, and entertain.

Lurline Martineau was born in Grenada, West Indies. After graduating from the Anglican High School, she pursued her talent in dressmaking. Siloam of Presbyterian Church is her church home, where she is an ordained elder and deacon. She joined Daytop Family Association in 1989 and is a trained facilitator. She received Daytop’s highest award in 2006. Currently, she is involved in conducting “Grief and Bereavement” groups, writing her memoirs, volunteering in a nursing home, and participating in Caring for the Caregiver.

Rebecca C. Plunkett’s (nom de plume) nursing career spans more than 40 years in the United Kingdom and New York City. Her earlier education began in Jamaica, West Indies, where she sat for the London GCE. She obtained her SRN and RMN from the General Nursing Council of England and Wales and her CNM from the Certified Nurse Midwives Board of London. In addition, she obtained a Tropical Nursing Degree from University Hospital of Tropical Diseases and Hygiene in London. Rebecca obtained her BSN from the City University of New York. She is also a Certified Childbirth Educator. Now retired, she writes short stories, children’s stories, poetry, and essays. She enjoys attending intellectual lectures and educational classes at venues throughout the NYC area. Her pastimes include reading, traveling, and gardening.

Glenda Martin Pollard was born and reared in the Edenwald Projects circa mid-1950s. After graduating from Cardinal Spellman H.S., she proceeded to enroll in many universities and colleges throughout New York State and Massachusetts, ostensibly in pursuit of a well-rounded education. Eventually earning a BS from CCNY and a BSN from Columbia University, Glenda worked as a Registered Nurse for more than 30 years. Now retired, she is happy to pursue her childhood passion of writing. Glenda is also very much steeped in holistic health modalities and is a Tibetan Usui Reiki master, therapeutic touch practitioner, and polarity therapist. She has two wonderful sons, Jason and Jordan, and three lovely granddaughters to date: Imani, Xaria, and Naima.

Teresa M. Snyder was born in Sandersville, Georgia, but attended elementary school in Brooklyn and graduated from Prospect Heights High School. She earned her BA from John Jay College, an MS from Fordham University, an MA from Cornell University, and an MPA from New York University. A retired analyst for New York State, Snyder has two adult children: a daughter who lives in Brooklyn and a son who lives in Maryland. Her daughter has given her two grandsons, and her son has given her two granddaughters, all of whom are college educated and one of whom has performed as a pianist in the Obama White House. Teresa loves writing, and she is a mentor to girls in the Women in Government program at Clara Barton High School, where she facilitates a book club.

Claudette Joy Spence holds a Master of Science in communications through the City University of New York. Her community development work spans 30 years in the USA and the Caribbean. Claudette is an educator, justice advocate, author, lay leader, and a budding visual artist. Claudette Joy self identifies as African American—an African soul birthed in Jamaica—who enjoys laughter and especially the sound of children at play. Her manuscript, a memoir on race and immigration, awaits joining her other four titles of which *Nurturing the Garden of Joy: Provocative Essays on Relationships* is most popular. Claudette Joy uses this as textbook for her SustainableJoy™ workshops, which model successful communication tools to sustain fruitful and stress-free relationships in our families, workplaces, and religious and social institutions.

Sylvia Jones Suescun was born in Freedman’s Hospital in Washington, D.C., in 1932. A member of the 1950 Dunbar High School graduating class, Suescun attended Morgan State College, where she earned a BS in 1954, and then moved to New York to work for the Department of Welfare Children’s Center. She decided to pursue graduate studies at Fordham University and worked as a therapeutic recreation director for Health and Hospital Corporation NYC for many years before she retired. Suescun’s father, Herbert Jones, was a music director for 50 years; and music was always in her home. An active officer at Siloam Presbyterian Church, she has sung in choirs all her life and enjoys travel and art in addition to music.

Cynthia Goodison Tompkins was born in 1933 in Brooklyn, N.Y., to two proud Jamaican parents. She attended PS 54, Girls High School, and Cheyney State Teachers College in Cheyney, Pennsylvania, where she earned a BS in education. Cynthia moved back to New York to earn her master’s degree in Early Childhood Education from the College of Staten Island. Retired from the New York City Board of Education after 30 years of service, Cynthia has volunteered as a volleyball coach, Brownie Girl Scout Leader, and cheerleading coach. She has a son, daughter, two grandsons, and one great-grandson.



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Clarence V. Reynolds, for his years of extraordinary service to the Center for Black Literature as the Director of Literary Programs and the Editor of the *Killens Review of Arts & Letters*.



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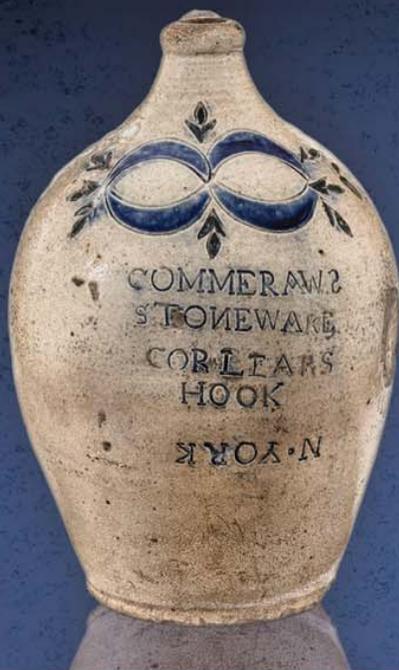
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