



May 2006 – Mississippi Humanities Council Newsletter  
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## 'New Harmonies' Exhibit Examines America's Musical Roots

Through a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Mississippi Humanities Council is bringing "New Harmonies," a traveling exhibit examining American roots music, to Mississippi. "New Harmonies" will travel to six different locations in Mississippi from March 2007 through January 2008.



The national opening for "New Harmonies" will take place in Meridian at the Riley Center in March 2007, with Senator Thad Cochran and Anna Cohn, director of the Smithsonian Institution, tentatively scheduled to do the honors.

"New Harmonies" tells the story of America through its music and the original styles born here – blues, country, western, folk, jazz and gospel, and how this music has shaped new American sounds from punk to hip-hop. American music carries a distinct cultural identity. The exhibition provides a fascinating, inspiring and toe-tapping listen to the American story of multi-cultural exchange.

Details about each Mississippi host site and accompanying programming will be posted soon on the Mississippi Humanities Council web site

([www.mshumanities.org](http://www.mshumanities.org)). Meanwhile, for questions, please contact David Morgan, MHC Project Specialist, at 601-432-6752 or david@mhc.state.ms.us.

## President Bush, Morgan Freeman Participate in MS Graduations

Dr. Willis Lott, chair of the Mississippi Humanities Council and president of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, secured the President of the United States to deliver the commencement address at his Biloxi campus Thursday, May 11. "It's a tremendous honor for our students, our college and our state to host President Bush for the most important event of our academic year," said Lott. MGCCC, established in 1911, was the largest community college in Mississippi before Hurricane Katrina. After the Aug. 29, 2005, storm, the college saw 3,000 of its 10,500 students withdraw, and the homes of more than 200 employees were either lost or uninhabitable. Despite those setbacks, MGCCC reopened just 17 days after Katrina made landfall.

Dr. John T. Thornell, vice president for academic affairs at Delta State University and a member of the Mississippi Humanities Council, announced that Oscar-winning, Mississippi-born actor Morgan Freeman will receive an honorary doctorate of arts and letters at the university's May 13 commencement address.

## Mississippi Humanities Council Awards \$5,925 in Cultural Grants

The Mississippi Humanities Council approved five minigrant projects in March for a total of \$5,925. Minigrant applications are reviewed bi-monthly. The approved projects span a variety of humanities disciplines. The successful proposals include:

- ***Mississippi Blueberry Storytelling Festival.*** Sponsor: Poplarville Storytellers Guild. Award: \$1,000. Eleventh annual storytelling festival in Poplarville.
- ***Less Commonly Taught Languages in Mississippi.*** Sponsor: Mississippi Foreign Language Association. Award: \$1,000. Two-day summer meeting at the University of Mississippi to allow officers of the Mississippi Foreign Language Association to dialogue with teachers of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) in Mississippi to gain a better understanding of the needs of Mississippi foreign language teachers.
- ***Family Reading Bonds.*** Sponsor: North Midtown CDC. Award: \$2,275. Reading program for lower elementary age children just learning how to read and their new-reader parents. Activities include read-aloud and group discussion sessions, facilitated by a professional storyteller, a humanities scholar and parents.

- ***Portraits in Public Health: Contributions in Minority Health Planning Grant.*** Sponsor: Jackson State University. Award: \$1,000. Funding to employ consultants to plan a permanent portrait gallery and audio-visual exhibit examining contributions to the health of Mississippians, especially minorities and the underserved. Exhibit will be displayed in the Jackson Medical Mall.
- ***From the Fire: Contemporary Korean Ceramics.*** Sponsor: Jackson State University. Award: \$650. Partnership between JSU and Mississippi Museum of Art to bring an exhibition of Korean ceramic works to Mississippi, culminating with a lecture and discussion by a specialist in Asian ceramic and cultural traditions.

## Reading Program Targets Mississippi's Hispanic Community

The *Luciérnagas* Family Reading Program, the Mississippi Humanities Council's reading program for the Hispanic community, is underway in Vardaman through June 19, hosted by Catholic Charities. Another program, coordinated by the Mississippi Hispanic Association, will take place at the public library in Pearl between June 6 and July 19.

Family Reading Bonds will be presented at the North Midtown Community Development Center in Jackson June 6 through July 18. Additional locations for both programs are being negotiated across the state for late summer and early fall.

## Next MHC Grant Deadline is July 1

July 1 is the next Mississippi Humanities Council minigrant application deadline for proposals up to \$2,000. Application guidelines and forms are available at [www.mshumanities.org](http://www.mshumanities.org).

## Upcoming Humanities Events in Mississippi

- June 30–July 1, 2006, ***The Blues in Claiborne County: From Rabbit Foot Minstrels to Blues and Cruise***, Port Gibson, MS. The Claiborne County Board of Supervisors will create an historical exhibit tracing the history of Port Gibson as an important center for the performance and spread of blues music. The exhibit will document in text and photos the career of the world renowned "Rabbit Foot Minstrels" in Port Gibson from 1918 through the 1950s, and the revival of blues music performance in the Blues and Cruise Festival beginning in 2002. A public forum will be held

June 30–July 1 to open the exhibit during the 4th annual Blues and Cruise Festival.

For contact information and further details about Mississippi Humanities Council–sponsored events, please visit our Events Calendar at [www.mshumanities.org](http://www.mshumanities.org).

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