

Focus on the Humanities

June 2008 - Mississippi Humanities Council Newsletter

(Visit our web site at www.mshumanities.org to learn more about us.)

Contents:

- MHC Chair Receives National Leadership Award
- Former MHC Board Member Honored With Camp Dedication
- MHC Cancels September 1, 2008 Minigrant Round
- Sites Set for Smithsonian Exhibit Tour
- Journey Stories Speakers Needed
- MHC Offers Teachers' Institute on Mississippi Writers
- African American Art Exhibit Offered by Smithsonian
- MHC Awards \$21,509 for Humanities Programming
- Next MHC Grant Deadline July 1, 2008

MHC Chair Receives National Leadership Award



Rod Risley, executive director of Phi Theta Kappa international honor society and chair of the Mississippi Humanities Council, was presented the 2008 National Leadership Award from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) during a historic joint session of the AACC Annual Convention and the Phi Theta Kappa International Convention held April 5 in Philadelphia. The award honors outstanding leadership at the national level and long-standing commitment to community colleges.

"It is my hope that this recognition provided today serves to raise the aspirations of all Phi Theta Kappa members here today and those in the future of what is possible to achieve in life by believing in an idea... that excellence knows no boundaries, that the acquiring of knowledge is a responsibility and a gift – a gift to be shared to improve the quality of life of those we serve," Risley said in his acceptance remarks. "This award recognizes an extraordinary journey of many – members, advisors, presidents, administrators, Phi Theta Kappa staff past and present who were joined by a belief – that each has the responsibility to learn and to serve."

Risley, himself a community college graduate, began work with Phi Theta Kappa in 1977. He was named executive director in 1985 with a staff of five, an annual operating budget of \$500,000, and 550 chapters located in 48 states. Today the staff numbers nearly 70, the operating budget exceeds eight million dollars, and the Society serves 1,250 chapters in all 50 states, U.S. Territories, Canada, Germany, the British Virgin Islands, the Republics of Palau and Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and the United Arab Emirates. Nearly 100,000 students earn Phi Theta Kappa membership annually, and 2.25 million members have been inducted since 1918, making Phi Theta Kappa the largest honor society in higher education.

Former MHC Board Member Honored With Camp Dedication

Theodore Levi, a former member of the Mississippi Humanities Council board, will be honored Monday, June 30, at a dedication ceremony of the new Theodore (Ted) Levi Creative Arts Center at the URJ Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Utica, MS. The dedication recognizes Levi's ongoing support of the youth camp.

MHC Cancels September 1, 2008 Minigrant Round

Due to severe funding limitations, the Mississippi Humanities Council will not offer a September 1, 2008, minigrant round. Our next minigrant deadline is July 1, 2008, and another will follow on November 1, 2008. Oral history proposals WILL be accepted.

Sites Set for Smithsonian Exhibit Tour

Between May 2009 and March 2010, the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit, *Journey Stories, Stories of Immigration, Migration and Transportation in America*, will be displayed at six locations across Mississippi. Host sites include Clinton (A.E. Wood Memorial Library and Clinton Visitor Center, sponsors), Southaven (M.R. Davis Library, sponsor), Natchez (Institute for Southern Jewish Life and Historic Natchez Foundation, sponsors), McComb (McComb City Railroad Depot Museum, sponsor), Hazelhurst (Hazelhurst Depot Museum and Copiah County Office of Cultural Affairs, sponsors), Long Beach (University of Southern Mississippi, sponsor). Congratulations to all of these sites which were selected based on strength of community support and plans for complementing local exhibits and programming.

***Journey Stories* Speakers Needed**

The Mississippi Humanities Council is looking for speakers to serve on our speakers' roster for the upcoming *Journey Stories* exhibit. Exhibit topics include One Way Trip, Across the Eastern Mountains, Across the Great Desert to the West, Railroads Span the Nation, Accelerated Mobility and Our Expanded World. Presentations related to immigration, migration, transportation and travel in America (and Mississippi) are welcomed. For more information or to discuss further please contact David Morgan, project specialist, at 601-432-6204, or david@mhc.state.ms.us.

MHC Offers Teachers' Institute on Mississippi Writers



MHC invites high school and community college educators to join in a celebration of four of Mississippi's greatest treasures: Margaret Walker, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams and Richard Wright. We aim to empower educators by deepening content knowledge of some of our most important writers and their works. We offer an opportunity to develop personal connections with their writings, share approaches for teaching the material, earn professional development credit, and renew an appreciation of reading for reflection and growth. For more information or to sign up, please visit www.mshumanities.org.

African American Art Exhibit Offered by Smithsonian

The Smithsonian Institution has added an additional booking period for its tour, *Ancestry & Innovation: African American Art from the American Folk Art Museum*, from November 7, 2009– January 17, 2010. The ongoing contribution of self-taught black artists to American visual culture is celebrated in this exhibition featuring works from the American Folk Art Museum. *Ancestry & Innovation* juxtaposes complex and vibrant quilts with paintings and sculpture by an elder generation of creators as well as contemporary masters and emerging artists. The exhibit includes 39 quilts, sculpture, framed paintings and works on paper; pedestals, text panels, labels. Supplemental materials include a poster, brochure, curriculum material, educational and promotional resources and a speakers list. It requires 3,000 square feet of exhibit space and high security. The cost is \$25,000 per 10-week booking period, plus prorated shipping. For more information, contact Michelle Torres-Carmona, 202.633.3143 or torrescm@si.edu or visit www.sites.si.edu/newsletter/index.html



The Man Rode Past His Barn To Another New Day, 1994–1995
Thornton Dial Sr. (b. 1928) Bessemer, Alabama

Oil and enamel on canvas with clothing, carpet, rope, wire, and industrial sealing compound; 84 x 120 x 11.5";
collection American Folk Art Museum, New York,
gift of Jane Fonda, 2001.2.1

MHC Awards \$21,509 for Humanities Programming

The Mississippi Humanities Council recently approved several grant applications totaling \$21,509. The approved projects span a variety of humanities disciplines and include:

- ***Step into My Parlor Symposium***. Sponsor: Manship House Museum. Award: \$1,500. One-day symposium, including performances, lectures and demonstrations by renowned scholars, offering a better understanding of the lives of our Victorian ancestors.
- ***SonEdna Foundation Strategic Plan***. Sponsor: SonEdna Foundation. Award: \$1,500. Consultant to guide formation of a strategic plan for Foundation, established by Mississippi actor Morgan Freeman, which will support literacy and literary efforts in the Mississippi Delta.
- ***Mississippi Archaeology Month***. Sponsor: Mississippi Archaeological Association. Award: \$3,267. Comprehensive statewide program to increase public awareness of Mississippi history. Activities will include archaeological excavations, artifact classification and manufacturing primitive tools.
- ***Mississippi Philosophical Association Medical Ethics Conference***. Sponsor: Mississippi Philosophical Association. Award: \$2,920. Annual conference will focus on subject of medical ethics.
- ***Unburied Treasures: Made in America***. Sponsor: Mississippi Museum of Art. Award: \$2,482. Monthly humanities series celebrating visual art, literature and

music. Each one-hour program features an object from the Museum's permanent collection, and includes guest artists, musicians and readers.

- **16th Annual Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival.** Sponsor: Coahoma Community College. Award: \$3,650. Annual celebration of Mississippi playwright's genius and the region's cultural heritage, which he immortalized in dramas. The 2008 Festival has been selected for a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) Radio 2 documentary narrated by Academy Award-winning actor Morgan Freeman.
- **The Southern Literary Trail: Mississippi Writers and Their Places.** Sponsor: Mississippi Center for the Book. Award: \$2,190. Events and programs will showcase the hometowns of six major Mississippi authors: William Faulkner, Shelby Foote, Walker Percy, Margaret Walker Alexander, Eudora Welty and Richard Wright.

Next MHC Grant Deadline July 1, 2008

July 1, 2008, is the next minigrant application deadline for proposals up to \$2,000. Application guidelines and forms are available at www.mshumanities.org.

MHC Welcomes Your Support

The humanities are vital to each of us – to our self-awareness, our understanding of the past and our vision of the future. The Mississippi Humanities Council has been bringing the insights of history and culture into people's lives since 1972. The Council celebrates and preserves our diverse cultural heritage, creates public dialogue on issues that matter and enriches the education we offer our children. The Council depends on public support. Won't you join us? The MHC will appreciate your financial help. To donate online, please visit <http://www.mshumanities.org/Donor/Donations.asp> . Or call 601-432-6752.



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