

Focus on the Humanities

April 2009 - Mississippi Humanities Council Newsletter

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

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MHC Elects New Board Member

Dr. William Lewis, president of Pearl River Community College, was elected to a four-year term on the Mississippi Humanities Council board directors at the Council's February meeting. A native of Clinton, MS, Dr. Lewis earned a bachelor's degree from Mississippi College, as well as master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi. He has 30 years of service to the state's public education system, including teaching, coaching and administration. Dr. Lewis became the 10th president of Pearl River Community College in 2000.

Since his appointment, Pearl River has experienced significant growth in enrollment, developed a national reputation for excellence in teaching and learning, produced a national championship in football and is widely recognized for the quality of its arts program. Lewis and his wife, Janet, have two children, Kelli, a graduate of the University of Mississippi, and Jay, a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi. They also have two grandchildren.



Dr. William Lewis

of

The '4 Ws' Enrichment Institute Continues to Inspire MS Educators

The Mississippi Humanities Council's "4 Ws: Wright, Welty, Williams and Walker" enrichment institute continues to inspire Mississippi educators with the exploration of the works and lives of four of

Mississippi's greatest authors. The authors – Margaret Walker, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams and Richard Wright – offer clear voices for understanding life in our state over the last century. They are writing treasures whose lives and work offer a cross section of the Mississippi experience, representing different regions of the state, and bringing perspectives from men, women, African Americans, whites, folks who were poverty-stricken and those who were middle class. The institute, which began last fall and will conclude in May, is designed to coincide with centennial celebrations of the birthdays of Richard Wright and Eudora Welty. The aim of the institute is to empower educators by deepening content knowledge of four of the state's most important writers through opportunities to develop personal connections with the works of these writers, share approaches for teaching the material and renew an appreciation of reading for reflection and growth. Participants meet one Saturday a month with nationally recognized scholars who lead discussions and work alongside participants to probe each writer's words and study the times in which they lived. The institute includes field trips to sites of memory, such as the bedroom where Eudora Welty wrote, the house of Richard Wright's enslaved grandfather and the Delta hometown of Tennessee Williams.



Participants in the Mississippi Humanities Council's '4 Ws' enrichment institute spent a recent Saturday in the Mississippi Delta studying the works of playwright Tennessee Williams.

MHC Presents Annual Humanities Awards

On February 27, the Mississippi Humanities Council presented its 2009 Public Humanities Achievement Awards at the *Celebrating Excellence in Humanities Education* banquet and awards program. Recipients included:

- Humanities Scholar Award – Dr. Suzanne Marrs, professor of English at Millsaps College and Welty Foundation Scholar-in-Residence, for her contributions to the Council, particularly those involving Eudora Welty’s work, spanning a quarter century.
- Humanities Educator Award – Dr. Jean Chamberlain, chair of the graduate school of liberal arts at Jackson State University, for her many years’ work with the Council, especially through the Mississippi Council of Teachers of English where she has dedicated herself to improving the teaching of English in secondary schools.
- Humanities Partner Award – Coahoma Community College and Panny Mayfield for their annual Tennessee Williams Festival which recently celebrated its 16th anniversary and drew the interest of the BBC.
- Preserver of Mississippi Culture – Malcolm White, director of the Mississippi Arts Commission and longtime champion of cultural endeavors, for his work to preserve traditional art, as well as more formal media.
- Special Recognition Awards – Manship House Museum for a series of highly successful public programs over the past two years covering a broad range of humanities topics; Marsha Meeks Kelly, retired executive director of the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service, for her work with the Council on numerous programs, most recently the Meaning of Service discussion series; and Jill Smith of the Union County Heritage Museum for exemplary sponsorship of the Council’s *New Harmonies* traveling exhibit.

The 2008 Humanities Teacher Award recipients were also honored. Please visit www.mshumanities.org for photos of other award winners.

MHC’s Dr. Luther Brown Recognized by MS House of Representatives

Dr. Luther P. Brown, a member of the Mississippi Humanities Council board and director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University, was commended by the Mississippi House of Representatives in Jackson recently for his work with the Center. A resolution read on the House floor recognized Dr. Brown’s “unceasing devotion...to the advanced development of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University and his commitment to the development of the student mind and



Dr. Luther Brown, center, with his wife, Bonnie, left, and members of the Mississippi House of Representatives. (Photo by Mac Gordon)

matriculation as associate dean for Delta Regional Development.” The Center’s mission is to promote the understanding of the history and culture of the Mississippi Delta and its significance to the rest of the world. It is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the humanities and environmental sciences as they relate to the Delta. While based within the university setting, the Delta Center works throughout the region, with local chambers of commerce, K-12 school districts, Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and visiting college groups from around the nation. For more about the Delta Center for Culture and Learning, visit <http://www.blueshighway.org/>.

Former MHC Director to Receive Fannie Lou Hamer Humanitarian Award



Dr. Cora Norman

Dr. Cora Norman, executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council from 1972 to 1996, is among six individuals who will be recognized by the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy. Norman will receive a Fannie Lou Hamer Humanitarian Award for her efforts, as director of the Mississippi Humanities Council, to create and maintain a statewide dialogue on race and gender. Other honorees include Dr. L.C. Dorsey, Dr. Marvin Hogan, Alderman Hattie Robinson Jordan, Dr. Aaron Shirley and the Rev. Dr. Keith Tonkel. The awards will be given at the 3rd Annual Fannie Lou Hamer Humanitarian Awards Luncheon Friday, April 17, at Jackson State University.

Workshop for Teachers Offered: ‘Three Rs of the Mississippi Delta’

The Delta Center for Culture and Learning will host a two-week workshop for K-12 teachers from across Mississippi entitled “The Three Rs of the Mississippi Delta: Roads, Rivers and Railways” May 26 through June 5. Participants will learn about the physical and cultural geography of the Delta. Activities include a ride on the Illinois Central Railroad, a tour of a working towboat on the Mississippi River and a road trip on Highway 61 to Memphis. The workshop is the third such event offered with support from the Mississippi Geographic Alliance and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board. Registrations will be accepted through April 10. For more information, please visit www.blueshighway.org.

MHC Board Member Ricki Garrett Receives Dissertation Award



Dr. Ricki Garrett

Mississippi Humanities Council board member Dr. Ricki Garrett was awarded a UMI Dissertation Award by the 2009 Council of Historically Black Graduate Schools for her 2008 doctoral dissertation, “The Critical Skill Needs of Infant and Toddler Educators as Perceived by Practitioners and Higher Education Faculty,” conferred by Jackson State University in July 2008. Garrett received a Ph.D. in urban higher education. She was nominated for the UMI Dissertation Award by her advisor, Dr. Walter Brown, dean of the graduate school at JSU. UMI is a division of ProQuest, which publishes digital dissertations from around

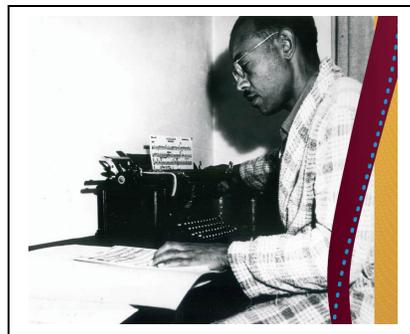
the world and makes them available to libraries and online. Two UMI awards are granted each year by the Council of Historically Black Graduate Schools, one for a master's thesis and one for a doctoral dissertation.

Applications Invited for 'Congress in the Classroom' Workshop

High school or middle school teachers who teach U.S. history, government, civics, political science or social studies are invited to register for the 2009 Congress in the Classroom workshop. Forty teachers will be selected to take part in the program. Online applications will be taken through April 15, with selections announced by April 30. The 2009 program will focus on two themes: 1) developments in the 111th Congress and 2) new resources for teaching about Congress. The workshop will be held July 27-20 in East Peoria, IL, with up to 22 Continuing Education Units available to participants. For more information and the online registration form, please visit www.dirksencenter.org/programs_CiCApplication.htm.

William Grant Still Traveling Exhibit Continues Its Tour

"William Grant Still: Inspired to Inspiring," is a traveling exhibit sponsored through a collaborative partnership between the Mississippi Arts Commission, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Mississippi Library Commission. Consisting of eight free-standing fabric panels, the exhibit celebrates the life and work of Woodville native, William Grant Still, who was known as



the "Dean of American Negro Composers." Still wrote more than 150 compositions before his death in 1978. Famed conductor Leopold Stokowski called him "one of our greatest American composers" and the LA Times recognized him as "our great resident composer" in 1956. The exhibit will travel the state, with 13 stops scheduled through November 2009. The scheduled locations and dates are as follows:

Apr 06-Apr 30 Robert C. Irwin Public Library/Tunica

May 06-May 29 Lexington Public Library/Lexington

June 06-June 30 Gulf Coast Community College/Gautier

July 06-July 31 MSU Riley Center/Meridian

Aug 06-Sept 02 Forrest County Public Library/Hattiesburg

Sept 07-Sept 30 Lafayette County & Oxford Public Library

Oct 05-Oct 30 Alcorn University (JD Boyd Library)/Lorman

Nov 18-Nov 22 William Grant Still Conference/Natchez

For more information, contact 601-359-6030.

Upcoming Humanities Events in Mississippi

- April 9, 2009, *Is the American Dream Sustainable? Part I: Impact on U.S./Mexico Relations*, Anderson Hall, Northeast Mississippi Community College, Booneville, MS. Lecture exploring the ethical implications of the "American Dream" in the context of history, economics, religion and politics.
- April 16, 2009, *Welty Centennial/Southern Literary Festival*, Millsaps College, Jackson, MS. Celebration of the life and achievement of Eudora Welty on the centennial of her birth, including readings and discussions of literature of three generations of distinguished writers who have come after Welty and whom she encouraged, championed and inspired, either in person or by her example. Events will include readings, panel discussions and creative writing workshops.
- April 17, 2009, *Education Concert*, Davis Event Center, Itawamba Community College, Fulton, MS. Educational concert for students of the Itawamba County School District, led by nationally-recognized conductor Steven Byess. The public is welcome.
- May 14, 2009, *50th Anniversary Wade-In Commemoration*, Community Center, Biloxi, MS, and USM-Long Beach Campus. May 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of an historic wade-in led by Dr. Gilbert R. Mason Sr. and nine other African American Mississippi Gulf Coast citizens. A commemoration of the wade-in will take place at various locations along the coast between May 14 and May 17.

Next MHC Grant Deadline April 15, 2009

April 15, 2009, is the next minigrant application deadline for proposals up to \$1,200. Regular grant proposals (between \$1,200 and \$3,000) will also be accepted through April 15, 2009. Application guidelines and forms are available at www.mshumanities.org.

MHC Welcomes Your Support

Mississippi Humanities Council programs are engaging, inspiring and free of charge. Your gift makes a big difference to our mission of cultivating an understanding of our history and culture throughout the state. You help us enrich peoples' lives through programs incorporating history, literature, music, politics, philosophy and other humanities-based disciplines that illuminate the human condition. Thanks to your support, we are able to serve all Mississippians: all ages, all geographic areas of the state, all walks of life.

A small gift of \$25 will purchase two books for children participating in the Mississippi Humanities Council's [Family Reading Bonds](#) program.

A larger gift of \$250 will fund a lecture in a school classroom, local library or civic club, by a member of the Mississippi Humanities Council [Speakers Bureau](#).

A \$2,500 contribution will underwrite a six-week [Family Reading Bonds](#) series, part of the Mississippi Humanities Council's literacy program.

A gift of any amount can support any one of our ongoing programs:

- [Oral History Projects](#)
- [Lecture Series](#)
- [Smithsonian Exhibits](#)
- [Public Humanities Awards](#)

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. The MHC will appreciate your financial help. To donate online, please visit <http://www.mshumanities.org/Donor/Donations.asp> . Or call 601-432-6752.



Disclaimer

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