



**Center for Black Literature**

**School of Professional &  
Community Development**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE ELEVENTH NATIONAL BLACK WRITERS CONFERENCE**

**MARCH 29, 2012–APRIL 1, 2012**

**“THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION, POPULAR CULTURE, AND  
THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE LITERATURE OF  
BLACK WRITERS”**

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**NATIONAL** - The Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, will host the Eleventh National Black Writers Conference (NBWC) on Thursday, March 29 through Sunday, April 1, 2012, on the college campus at 1650 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. Centered around the theme “The Impact of Migration, Popular Culture, and the Natural Environment in the Literature of Black Writers,” the 2012 Conference will honor literary and cultural icons Kenyan-born writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o; poet, novelist, essayist, and publisher Ishmael Reed; poet Nikki Giovanni; and Dr. Howard Dodson, former director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

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Hailed by best-selling author Walter Mosley as “the most significant gathering of Black writers in the country,” the NBWC is the only gathering of its kind in North America. “Black writers and artists are natural cultural explorers and investigators,” said Dr. Brenda M. Greene, Director of the National Black Writers Conference and Executive Director of the Center for Black Literature. “Their works reveal the importance of memory on our concepts of self and family; examine the impact of popular culture on our personal lives, belief systems, and traditions; and chronicle the effects of our actions on our natural environment. They use the power of words and the literary arts to stir our imaginations.”

Highlights of this year’s Conference will include poetry presentations by South African Poet Laureate Keorapetse Kgotsitsile and world-renowned poet Nikki Giovanni; a conversation with author and broadcaster Tavis Smiley; and Haki Madubuti, Herb Boyd, Ron Daniels, and Michael Simanga will engage in a roundtable discussion and critical response to Manning Marable’s *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. This year’s Conference will also devote a day to film screenings by Black filmmakers. “Films are our words in motion; every film begins with the written word. There are many films that are adapted from books to begin with so to include them in the conference is a natural and organic evolution,” added Dr. Greene.

Since its inception in 1986, the National Black Writers Conference has consistently attracted a stellar roster of writers and scholars who have been featured in panel and roundtable discussions, youth and elder writers’ workshops, talkshops on fiction, poetry and drama, film screenings, author readings and book signings. Confirmed participants for 2012 NBWC four-day lineup include authors, poets, and publishers such as Haki Madhubuti, Sterling Plumpp, Tavis Smiley, Herb Boyd, Patricia Smith, Camille Dungy, Isabel Wilkerson, Nana Ekua Brew-Hammond, Nnedi Okorafor, Lita Hooper, Rev. Conrad Tillard, William Jelani Cobb, R. Dwayne Betts, Maulana Karenga, Teju Cole, Bernice L. McFadden, Elizabeth Nunez, Karen Hunter, Sofia Quintero, Joan Morgan, Jeffery Renard Allen, Opal Palmer Adisa, Tiphonie Yanique, Darryl Pinckney, Robert Fleming, Sarah M. Broom, Anthony Grooms, Angela Dodson, Troy Johnson, Laura Pegram, Calvin Reid, Regina Brooks, JLove Calderon, Linda A. Duggins, Lisa C. Moore, Johnny Temple and Cheryl Woodruff, among others.

### *3 Black Writers Conference*

Ishmael Reed, on speaking as to why we need to continue to present National Black Writers Conferences, recounts, "In 2009, I published a story that was translated from the first Alaskan language to become extinct in the previous year. This is what happens to a culture that loses to the inexorable forces of assimilation... . The National Black Writers Conference at Medgar Evers College is needed and is more than a gathering of scholars and writers; it is a meeting of resisters."

This year's Conference has received major funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

#### **About the National Black Writers Conference**

Sponsored by the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, the National Black Writers Conference (NBWC) provides emerging and established writers, literary scholars, critics, agents, publishers and booksellers, as well as the general public, with a forum to share the writing published by Black writers, discuss the trends and themes in Black literature, and identify the major issues and challenges faced by Black writers and those in the business of reading, publishing, and selling Black literature.

Initially inspired by the late John Oliver Killens, the Conference has been held at Medgar Evers College since 1986. John Oliver Killens was a writer-in-residence and professor at Medgar Evers College from 1981 to 1987. The first NBWC held at Medgar Evers College, a year before Killens's death on October 27, 1987, focused on the social responsibility of the Black writer. Each subsequent Conference was built on the previous one, attracting a national and international audience. The Conference is currently held biennially; on alternate years, literary symposia are held.

#### **About the Center for Black Literature**

Founded in 2003, and spearheaded by Dr. Brenda M. Greene, the Center for Black Literature at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, was established to expand, broaden, and enrich the general public's knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of the value of black literature; to continue the tradition and legacy of the National Black Writers Conference; to serve as a voice, mecca, and resource for Black writers; and to study the literature of people from the African Diaspora. It is the only Center devoted to this in the country.

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For further information about this historic literary event and for Conference updates, pre-NBWC programs, and the awards tribute and ceremonies, please call 718-804-8883, e-mail: [nbwc@mec.cuny.edu](mailto:nbwc@mec.cuny.edu), or visit the Conference Web site at <http://www.nationalblackwritersconference.org>.

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