



City College Libraries
North Academic Center
160 Convent Avenue
New York, New York 10031

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CCNY Libraries Exhibit Opening
"The Langston Hughes Festival: A Celebration of African American Writers"
NEW YORK, August, 2010

Maya Angelou. James Baldwin. Amiri Baraka. Octavia Butler. Toni Morrison. Alice Walker. These are just some of the literary giants who, over the course of the last 32 years, have been honored with the Langston Hughes medallion at the annual Langston Hughes Festival. "The Langston Hughes Festival: A Celebration of African American Writers," a new CCNY Libraries exhibit, pays homage to these superb writers of the African Diaspora and the event which has contributed to making CCNY an intellectual and social hub of this great city, welcoming such luminaries as Arthur Ashe, Colleen Dewhurst, David Dinkins, and Danny Glover. "This exhibition also signals to our students that sharing stories is an honorable and worthy pursuit, particularly for African Americans thirsting for closer contact with and greater awareness of model writers as they undertake the fine art of literary composition themselves," notes current Festival Director and exhibit co-curator Professor Gordon Thompson of the CCNY English Department.

The exhibit draws from the wealth of primary documents that comprises the Langston Hughes Festival Collection, housed in the Cohen Library Archives and Special Collections. The Collection includes Festival program covers depicting images of the honorees, digests of their legacy, press releases, photographs of Festival

celebrants, posters, and audio recordings and was made possible through the generous donations of past Festival directors and the efforts of both Professor Thompson and co-curator and CCNY Libraries reference librarian Professor William Gibbons. CCNY Black Male Initiative students Taqiyya Haden, Editor of the school newspaper, *The Campus*, and Conor Tomás Reed served as contributing writers for the exhibit and were also immersed in researching the life of Hughes and the history of the Festival.

The exhibit also documents the Langston Hughes Choral Speaking Program at CCNY where every spring, grammar school students interpret Langston Hughes' work through recitations, dance, vocal and instrumental music, and drama. By bringing together students from throughout New York City as well as Long Island and New Jersey in powerful renditions inspired by his work, the Program ensures that Hughes' work continues to influence younger generations. "'A Celebration of African American Writers'" will inform newer campus arrivals of the legacy of the Langston Hughes Festival; and, with its sharpened profile, the Festival will continue to contribute to the bright luster that is currently associated with the City College of the City of New York/CUNY," notes Professor Thompson.

"The Langston Hughes Festival: A Celebration of African American Writers" will be on display at the Cohen Library Archives Gallery August 30, 2010 through December 31, 2010. An opening reception will be held in the Cohen Library Archives and Special Collections on September 15, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. The Langston Hughes Festival Collection is available for viewing at the Cohen Library Archives weekdays from 9:30am to 5:30pm. For an appointment, please call Archivist Professor Sydney Van Nort at (212) 650-7906. For more information about the exhibit, please call the Cohen Library at (212) 650-7271. City College is located at 138th Street and Convent Avenue in Manhattan.

About The City College of New York

For 160 years, The City College of New York has provided low-cost, high-quality education for New Yorkers in a wide variety of disciplines. Over 13,000 students pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Architecture, the School of Education, the Grove School of Engineering, the Center for Worker Education and the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education.