



# THE LANGSTON HUGHES FESTIVAL HONOREES

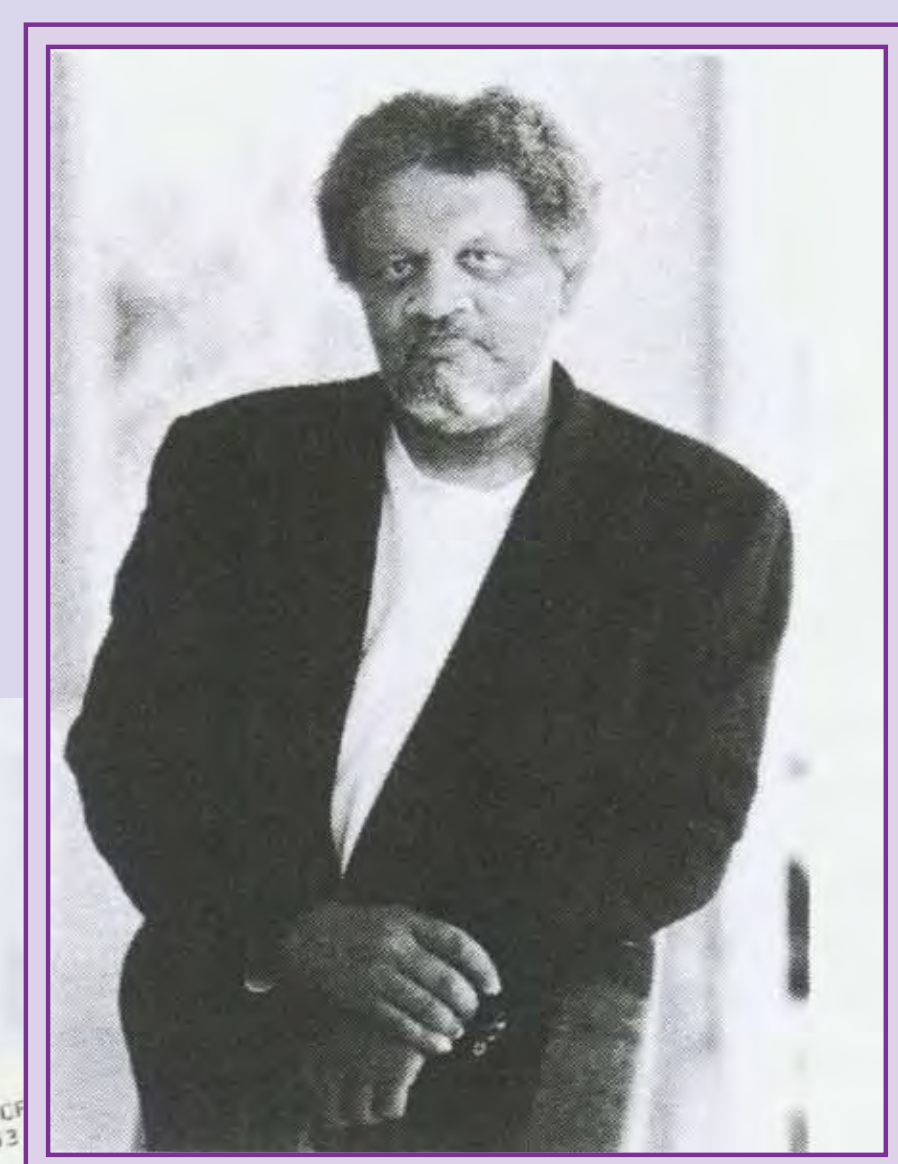
From Ernest Gaines to George Lamming 1994 – 1998

## 1994

### Ernest James Gaines

Ernest James Gaines was born and raised on River

Lake Plantation in Point Coupee Parish, not far from the banks of the Mississippi. He has written some of the most significant fiction on the folkways, languages, and local culture of black people in Louisiana. Gaines' work particularly focuses in and around the plantation where he grew up, endearing millions of hearts to the people of Louisiana. His first novel, *Catherine Carmier* (1964), is greatly influenced by Hemingway, but more consciously modeled after the work of Russian writer Turgenev.



Source: The City College of New York Archives

## 1995

### Ishmael Reed

Teacher, novelist, essayist, journalist, teacher, and media activist, Ishmael Reed has produced many politically thoughtful works. His books *Writin' Is Fightin': Thirty-seven Years of Boxing on Paper* (1988), later revised and expanded as *Writing Is Fighting: Forty-three Years of Boxing on Paper* (1998), aptly describe Ishmael Reed's writing, which never fails to challenge the status quo. Central themes in his fiction and nonfiction include race, class, gender, and mass media—all of which Reed approaches from an historical context. His latest nonfiction is *Pow Wow: Charting the Fault Lines in the American Experience: Short Fiction from Then to Now* (2009).

## 1996

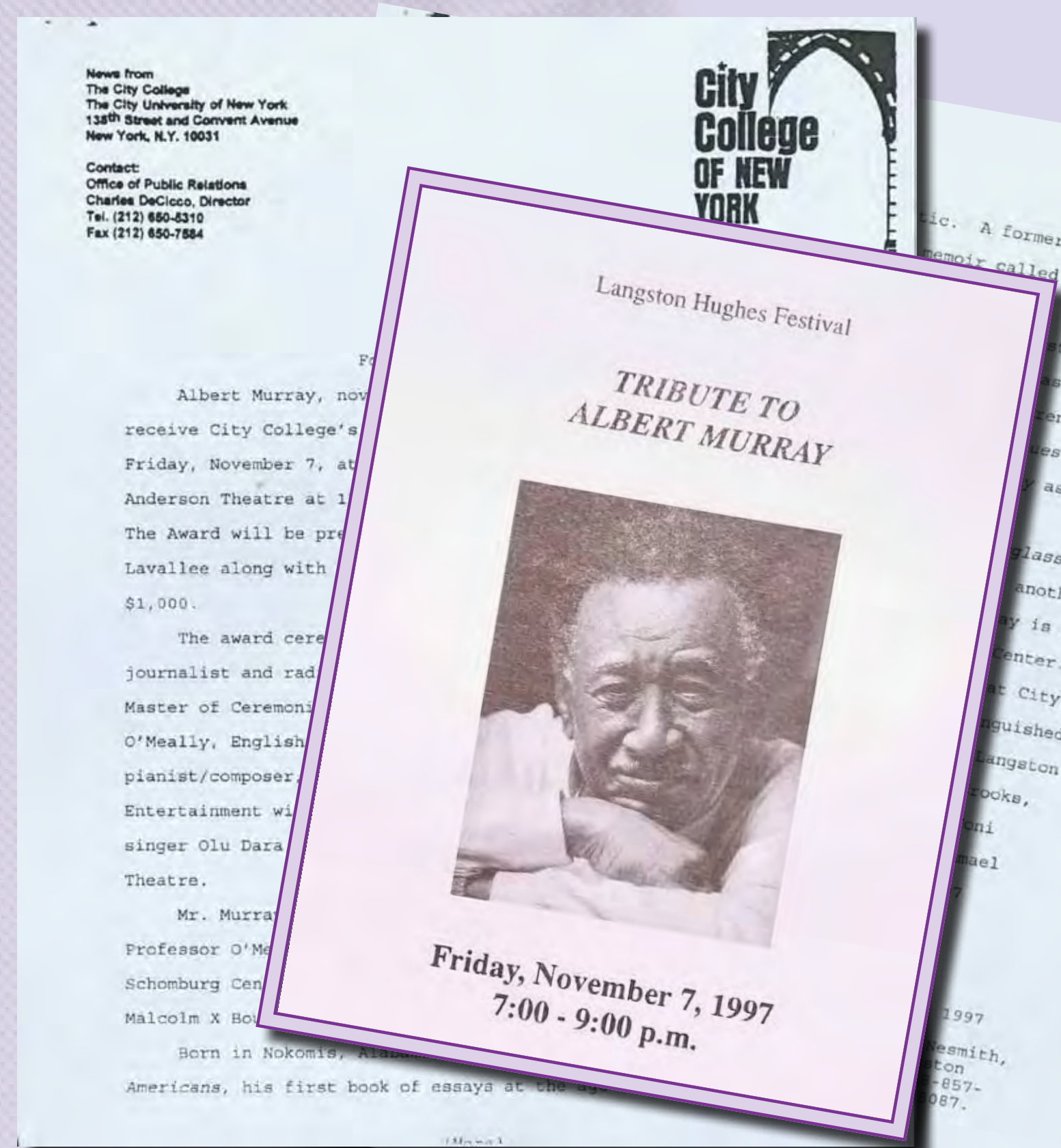
### Nikki Giovanni

Nikki Giovanni's passion for the rhythm and blues of the African American community has helped to shape her poetry. Giovanni's first volume of poetry, *Black Feeling*, *Black Talk* (1968), was followed closely by *Black Feeling*, *Black Talk*, *Black Judgment*. These early works established Giovanni as a special voice within the Black Power movement. A collection of her essays was published in *Gemini: An Extended Autobiographical Statement on My First Twenty-Five years of Being a Black Poet* (1971). Over her long career, Nikki Giovanni has written for children, notably *Ego Tripping and Other poems for Children* (1971) and *The Sun is So Quiet* (1996). After battling cancer, she wrote the introduction to *Breaking the Silence: Inspirational Stories of Black Cancer Survivors* (Karin Stanford, 2005). Her life and work have made Nikki Giovanni a cultural icon and a spokeswoman for the aspirations and racial sensitivities of African Americans for decades. Her latest poems are gathered in *Acolytes* (2007).

## 1997

### Albert Murray

Albert Murray is a literary and jazz critic, novelist, biographer, and a foundational thinker in the field of American Studies. Born in Nokomis, Alabama, in 1916, Murray had at least two careers before publishing his first collection of essays, *The Omni-Americans: New perspectives on black Experience and American Culture*, in 1970. His life journey includes graduating from Tuskegee, traveling the world in the Air Force, receiving a degree from New York University, witnessing firsthand the musical development of greats like Dizzy Gillespie and sharing his world and academic knowledge. Murray said that literature provides us “equipment for living.” His literary production gave us a wealth of equipment. His latest book is a novel called *The Magic Keys* (2005).

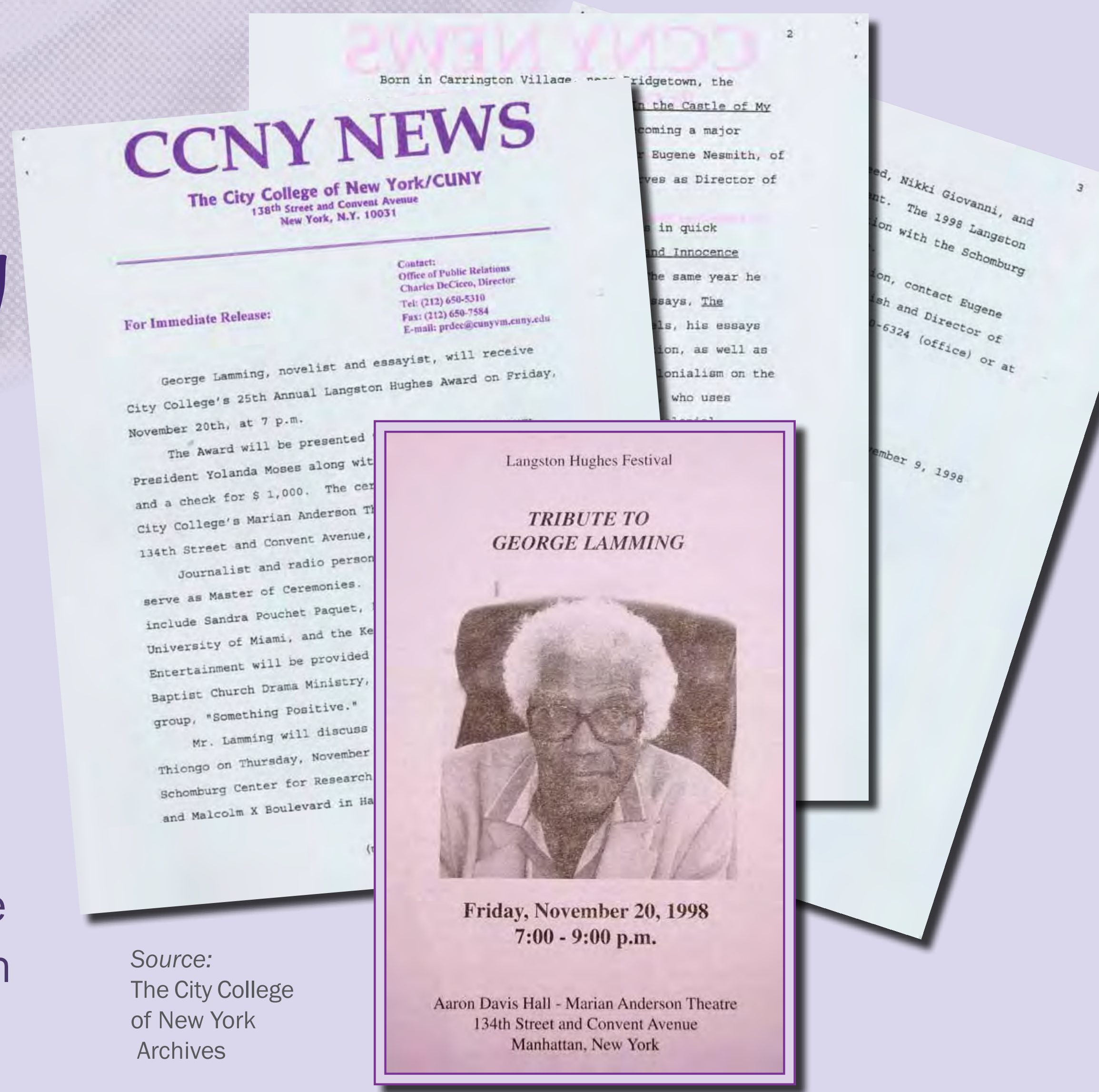


Source: The City College of New York Archives

## 1998

### George Lamming

George Lamming is one of the leading Caribbean writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born in Barbados in 1927, his writing on subjects like the black colonial experience, post-colonialism, and decolonization has established him as an intellectual of great influence. His first novel *In the Castle of my Skin* (1953) was an immediate success and was quickly followed with three more: *the Emigrants* (1954), *Of Age and Innocence* (1958), and *Season of Adventure* (1960). Lamming came onto the scene at a crucial period in Caribbean history when the struggle for nationalism and independence was on the rise. *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) is a collection of essays that gives greater detail about George Lamming, the activist.



Source: The City College of New York Archives



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