

Charles H. Wright

MUSEUM of AFRICAN
AMERICAN HISTORY

Rejoice • Relive • Reconnect

THE WRIGHT TIMES

CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY
MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Letter from the President

April 2011

Spring is the season of renewal, when the rhythms of the earth and sun create lengthening days and life responds by bursting forth from its winter hibernation. For the Charles H. Wright Museum, our yearly renewal begins with MLK Day, Black History and Women's History Month exhibitions and events that propel us forward like shoots from the soil to even greater things to come. To everyone who visited and experienced the film series, concerts and performances over the past few months, thank you so very much, and we do hope you join us again soon!

POETRY & SPOKEN WORD MONTH

April is Poetry and Spoken Word Month, and we'll be celebrating African American contributions to the craft with a *Bamboo Muse* reading featuring artist Alonzo Davis and poetry inspired by his works, a *Remembering Mahogany* open mic poetry performance, and the *GRIOT* youth story slam. We're also partnering with Detroit Public Television to present two fantastic, free film screenings, *Freedom Riders* and *Bhutto*. And for the sake of our community's financial well-being, we're continuing the *Smart Money Management* workshop series presented by the Urban Financial Services Coalition. These free events are aimed at fostering financial literacy for both adults and children.

FORD FREEDOM AWARD

If you had to select just one event that truly encapsulates the museum's mission, you couldn't go wrong with the Ford Freedom Award, an annual fundraiser made possible by the generous support of Ford Motor Company. Taking place Tuesday May 17, this year's event focuses on the law and honors "Champions of Justice" Judge Constance Baker Motley and Judge Damon J. Keith. An essay contest has been completed for grades 4 - 8 that attracts schools from across the region, as will the Scholar's Lecture by Judge Keith to be held during the day on May 17. That evening's black-tie gala event will follow Judge Baker Motley's name being enshrined in the Ford Freedom Rotunda's Ring of Genealogy, and is an event that is truly not to be missed. History, education, entertainment and achievement - this event has it all!

DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM

In addition to our newest exhibitions, *The Heidelberg Project: Art in the Streets* and *The Chris Webber Collection: Exceptional People During Extraordinary Times, 1755 - Present*, we are excited to be hosting *Dance Theatre of Harlem: 40 Years of Firsts* opening this June. This traveling exhibit is a project of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dance Theatre of Harlem and the California African American Museum, and will reflect on

the more than 40 years of history of this ground- and stereotype-breaking company.

In reflecting on the daily life and work of the museum, we of course have the events we plan for. But there are also those moments of glorious improvisation, such as when the North Carolina Central University Choir, upon completion of its tour, broke into song on the rotunda floor, followed by an impromptu performance by one of their members on the cello. As the strains of the prelude to Bach's Cello Suite No. 1 in G major reverberated off the dome, all present felt the magic and magnificence of a bit of history being made, as it is each day, within this wonderful museum. Do come be a part of it.

Juanita Moore,
President/CEO



RECENT EVENTS

Photos courtesy of Annistiqu Photography
www.annistiquphotography.com

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY CELEBRATION - JANUARY 17



WE REMEMBER YOU POETRY PERFORMANCE - FEBRUARY 20



FARAFINA KAN AFRICAN DRUM & DANCE PERFORMANCE - FEBRUARY 25



BLACK WOMEN ROCK! CONCERT - MARCH 18





2011 Ford Freedom Awards

Tuesday May 17



Judge Constance Baker Motley



Judge Damon J. Keith

On May 17, 2011 Ford Motor Company and the Charles H. Wright Museum present the 2011 Ford Freedom Awards with the theme, "Champions of Justice." The Ford Freedom Award is given posthumously to honorees who have dedicated their lives to improving the African American community and the world at large through their chosen fields. Each year, a Ford Freedom Award honoree and scholar are selected; the scholar is chosen for furthering the honoree's achievements for a new generation. The 2011 Ford Freedom Award will focus on the law and recognizes the accomplishments of **Judge Constance Baker Motley**, the 2011 Ford Freedom Award Honoree, and the 2011 Ford Freedom Award Scholar, **Judge Damon J. Keith**.

Constance Baker Motley's legal career began as a law clerk in the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, where she became its first female attorney. She wrote the original complaint in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and was the first African American woman to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Baker Motley won nine of the ten cases she argued before the Supreme Court, and was a key legal strategist in the civil rights movement, helping to desegregate Southern schools, buses, and lunch counters. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson appointed her as a federal court judge, the first African American woman so named.

In 1967 President Lyndon Johnson nominated Damon J. Keith to his seat on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, where he rose to Chief Judge of the District Court. In 1977 he was nominated to the Sixth Circuit by President Jimmy Carter. In *United States v. Sinclair* (1971), Keith ruled that Nixon's Attorney General John Mitchell had to disclose the transcripts of illegal wiretaps that Mitchell had authorized without first obtaining a search warrant. Keith's decision was upheld by the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court; the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *United States v. U.S. District Court* (1972) is known as "the Keith case."

In celebration of the 2011 Ford Freedom Award's recognition of these noteworthy jurists, Michigan students in grades 4 - 8 have submitted essays on the law, with 5 winners to receive Ford Freedom Award medals, certificates of merit and U.S. Savings Bonds in the following amounts: 1st place, \$5,000; 2nd prize, \$2,500; 3rd prize, \$1,000; and two honorable mentions for \$250 each. Teachers of the winning students will receive tickets to the Ford Freedom Awards Gala. All participating classes are invited to attend the free 2011 Scholar's Lecture to be held during the day on Tuesday, May 17. Last year's essay contest garnered over 1,000 entries, and the Scholar's Lecture attracted 1,600 students from across the region.

The black-tie Ford Freedom Awards Gala will be held the evening of Tuesday, May 17 and is an annual fundraiser for the Charles H. Wright Museum. This lavish affair will feature remarks by Judge Keith, dinner and entertainment, and regularly attracts the region's top movers and shakers. Tickets are \$150 each or \$100 for museum members, and can be purchased for \$125 each in groups of 10 or more. Tickets are available online at www.fordfreedomaward.com, or by phone at (313) 494-5800.

The Ford Freedom Award is a program of the Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. For more information please visit www.fordfreedomaward.com.



THE CHRIS WEBBER COLLECTION:

Exceptional People During Extraordinary Times, 1755 - Present

Opening April 2011

Chris Webber, Detroit native, National Basketball Association All-Star player (retired) and NBA announcer, collects rare artifacts that illuminate the lives and legacies of African American greats such as Phillis Wheatley, the first African American author; Rosa Parks, mother of the modern civil rights movement; civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and many others. Initially, the items were for Webber's personal inspiration. As the collection grew, he realized its potential to help educate society, especially children, about the people that helped shape America. Webber now shares his collection with the public by way of ongoing exhibitions. Artifacts to be displayed include the following:



Phillis Wheatley Book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, first edition, 1773

Born in West Africa, Wheatley was kidnapped at age seven and brought to the American colonies as a slave. In Boston, the prominent tailor, John Wheatley, purchased her as an attendant to his wife. Phillis quickly mastered English as well as the Latin the Wheatley family taught her as part of her religious instruction. By her teens, Phillis was an accomplished author invited to recite her poems before elite New England audiences.

Many of her poems appeared in periodicals and newspapers here as well as in England. In 1773, her first volume of poems was published in London. This book was the first ever written by an African American author and only the second book published by an American woman. Its publication brought her great acclaim both at home and in London. This same year, John Wheatley emancipated her. In 1778, she married John Peters, a free black Bostonian. She died in poverty at age thirty-one, unable to finance the publication of a second volume of poems and letters.

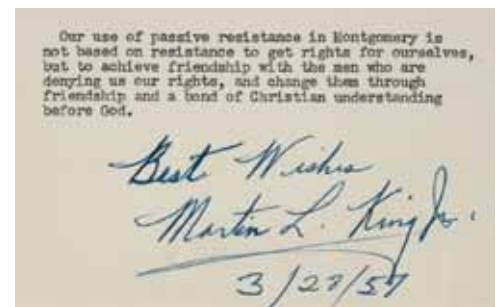
Frederick Douglass Signed Letter Written on "United States Marshal's Office" Stationery, March 13, 1878

In 1877, Frederick Douglass became the first African American appointed to a federal post as Marshal of the District of Columbia. President Rutherford B. Hayes nominated Douglass for the position, which required consent of the United States Senate. The letter thanks a man, A.G. Riddle, for sharing a copy of the eulogy he delivered.



Marian Anderson, Cover of TIME Magazine, December 30, 1946

A native of Philadelphia, Marian Anderson began singing at age three. There were many firsts in her career as a professional performer of operatic arias, nineteenth-century lieder and African American spirituals. She was the first African American singer to perform at the White House and the first to break the Metropolitan Opera's color barrier in 1955. She sang at the inaugurations of Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1957 and John F. Kennedy in 1961. In 1963, she performed before the hundreds of thousands gathered for the March on Washington for Freedom and Justice, where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his *I Have a Dream* speech. In 1939, Anderson became a national figure in the struggle for civil rights when controversy broke out surrounding her application to perform at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. When her application was denied, a national outcry led by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt resulted in Anderson's open-air recital from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial before an audience of 75,000. She quietly worked to overcome prejudice throughout her career, remaining steadfast in her faith in the possibility of change.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Signed Quotation, March 27, 1957

Special Group Tour packages and options are available

Dance Theatre of Harlem: 40 Years of Firsts

Opening June 16, 2011

Dance Theatre of Harlem has made history in the 40 years since Arthur Mitchell and the late Karel Shook founded it in 1969. This multimedia exhibit captures the majesty of the choreography, the beauty of the costuming, the dancers who defied gravity and stereotyping, plus Mitchell's wide-ranging accomplishments. Focusing on the discipline of dance, he brought ballet to Harlem and Dance Theatre of Harlem evolved from a school adding educational programs, professional training, and a world-class touring company as its artists became powerful ambassadors for all of America.

In 2009, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center and Dance Theatre of Harlem exhibited the company's rare costumes, photos and other memorabilia. The California African American Museum has supplemented the exhibit with the staging of costumes and video from four iconic ballets, added life-sized banners and other imagery to illuminate the forty years of history during which Dance Theatre of Harlem and Arthur Mitchell have received over 300 official citations for excellence.



The exhibition is a project of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and Dance Theatre of Harlem. The exhibition was developed by The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and Dance Theatre of Harlem, and prepared for touring in collaboration with the California African American Museum.



- call (313) 494-5808 to book yours today!

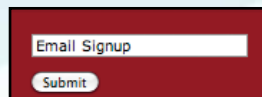
Support Our Museum from the Comfort of Your Keyboard

Join our social media street team!

Last year, the museum's fan page on facebook.com, the world's largest social network, grew by over 10,000 fans. But don't think that social media is just for the young; according to a report by the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, even the Elders are in on the action! According to its findings, social networking use among Internet users ages 50 and older nearly doubled from 22 percent in 2009 to 42 percent in May 2010, and usage among those over the age of 65 grew 100 percent over the same period.

Though excited by the growth of our fan page, the museum needs YOU to take its social media to the next level – and here are 5 easy ways you can help!

❶ Sign up on our email list: you'll receive a comprehensive monthly email newsletter and weekly email update, and there's no better way to stay informed of all the wonderful things taking place at the museum. You can sign up right on the top left corner of our website at www.chwmuseum.org.



Email Signup
Submit

PLEASE NOTE: we NEVER share our email list so your information is safe with us!



❷ Become a fan of our fan page at www.facebook.com/CharlesHWrightMuseum (NOTE: you must have a facebook account, which is free, to become a fan. If not, you can still explore our fan page).



❸ Share the fan page with your network by clicking the "Share" link on the lower left hand margin of our fan page – and tell your friends why you love us!

❹ RSVP to events you want to attend on the Events link by clicking "I'm Attending."

❺ Share events you'd like to attend with your friends on Facebook by clicking the "Share" link.

These simple steps will continue to grow our online presence and help us reach new fans. Thanks for your support – we'll see you online!



Featuring Wines Produced by African American Vintners
Friday May 27, 2011 at the Charles H. Wright Museum

Enjoy Great Wine 🍷 Great Art 🎨 Great Food 🍴 Great Music 🎵

6 - 9 pm - Wine Tasting & Wine Tasting 101 Classes 🍷 9 - 11 pm - Jazzy Afterglow

\$50 All Inclusive

Purchase your tickets today at www.brownpapertickets.com or by phone at (800) 838-3006

Support Our Museum

Your support is vital to helping the Charles H. Wright Museum fulfill its mission to provide “learning opportunities, exhibitions, programs and events based on collections and research that explore the diverse history and culture of African Americans and their African origins.”

Gifts from individuals are a vital source of operating support for the Museum. Your gift helps fund and maintain the Museum’s ongoing exhibits, programs and special events, and is an investment in the viability of the largest African American museum in the world!

BECOME A MEMBER

Join the Charles H. Wright Museum to receive these great benefits:

- Free admission to the museum
- Free guest pass(es) (Children’s category excluded)
- Invitations to Members’ Only previews
- Subscription to *The Wright Times* quarterly newsletter and monthly and weekly email updates
- 10% discount in the museum store (Children’s category excluded)
- Advance notice of special events
- Special pricing on select museum events



Our continued growth and vitality depends upon the support of the entire community. Your contributions ensure the continued success of our programs and exhibitions. Visit as often as you like; several convenient membership categories are available. For more information on membership please call (313) 494-5872 or visit www.chwmuseum.org/membership.

MAKE A DONATION

There are many ways to support the Museum by using various gift designations and ways to give. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding your contribution at (313) 494-5872.

VOLUNTEER

The Museum couldn’t maintain its high caliber of service without its dedicated volunteers! Call (313) 494-5826 to inquire about upcoming volunteer orientation dates.

**It's Never Too Early
To Start Planning Your**

WEDDING
PROM
GRADUATION
CORPORATE LUNCHEON

**CALL 313-494-5801
TODAY!**

Visitors' Voices



We the members of the Butler United Methodist Women had the pleasure of visiting your Museum on October 10th, 2010 as part of our Columbus Day weekend tour to Detroit. Our Tour Guide on arrival was Ms. Yolanda Jack.

We want to commend her for her eloquence, knowledge, and command of the material she presented to us. The sights and sounds in the museum brought back a painful yet vivid realization of the past. Ms. Jack brought life to the museum and created an atmosphere in which the events appeared to be happening in the “now.” The pride she took as she explained the different scenarios could only be described as “awesome.”

We want to thank and acknowledge Ms. Jack for her knowledge base of the history of the museum, her dedication, and for the great service she is providing.

*Respectfully,
Sylvia Miller
Treasurer/Tour Coordinator
Butler United Methodist Women
Bronx, NY*



This newsletter and museum programming is made possible by the generous support of our community partners. Thank you!



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CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

The Heidelberg Project: Art in the Streets

Now - November 27, 2011

Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise: An Artist's Journey

Now - May 29, 2011

Framed Stories: The Art of Carmen Cartiness Johnson and Jerome Wright

Now - April 11, 2011

The Chris Webber Collection: Exceptional People During Extraordinary Times, 1755-Present

April 2011 - April 2012

The Test: Tuskegee Airmen Project

Now - June 19, 2011

Eyes on Africa and the African Diaspora: The Photography of Asha Walidah and Bill Gosa

April 21 - July 24, 2011

Dance Theatre of Harlem: 40 Years of Firsts

June 16 - December 31, 2011

Ford Motor Company and Charles H. Wright Museum
 present the

2011 Ford Freedom Awards

TUESDAY MAY 17, 2011 at 6 PM

AT THE CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM
 OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Join us as we recognize and celebrate
CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE

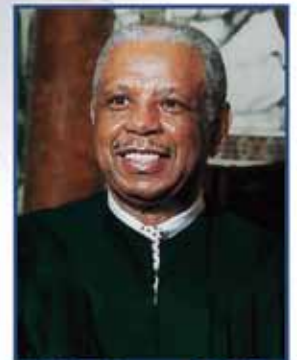
Purchase tickets at www.fordfreedomaward.com
 or by phone at (313) 494-5800



Judge Constance Baker Motley



Ford Motor Company



Judge Damon J. Keith

The Ford Freedom Award is an annual fundraiser for the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History that recognizes and celebrates individuals, past and present, whose achievements have brought forth lasting and positive change for African Americans - and the world.

Open Tuesday - Saturday 9 am - 5 pm | Sunday 1 - 5 pm | Closed Mondays

Museum Admission: Adults (13 - 61) \$8 | Adults (62+) \$5 | Youth (3 -12) \$5 | Members and children under 3 are admitted free.

