

THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

5 WASHINGTON STREET, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, January 14, 2010

For Immediate Release

Please Contact: Heidi Cramer 973-733-7837

Pam Goldstein 973-377-0300, Ext. 14

The Newark Public Library will commemorate Black History Month 2010 with an exhibit and related programs that highlight the achievements of prominent African American lawyers and judges.

Running through March 20, this year's salute, *Fiat Justitia, Let Justice Be Done*, will feature legal memos, documents, articles and artifacts that were used in landmark court cases, such as *The Amistad*, *Jena Six*, and the *Dred Scott* decision. They will be on display in the Main Library's second floor gallery. Curated by Sandra L. West, associate in the Library's James Brown African American Room, the exhibit will also celebrate lesser-known practitioners who were key players in cases that shaped the American landscape.

The celebration will kick off with a panel discussion on Wednesday, January 27 at 6 p.m. in the Main Library's Centennial Hall, 5 Washington Street. Attorney Jacquelyn R. Rucker, retired senior staff counsel in the New Jersey Law Office of The Hartford Insurance Company, will moderate the panel discussion, *How Do We Navigate Race & Racism in This Age of Obama?*

The panelists include Dr. S.E. Anderson, Brecht Forum Board of Directors; Joan P. Gibbs, Esq., general counsel for the Medgar Evers College Center for Law and Social Justice and project director of the Medgar Evers College Immigration Center, and David Dante Troutt, Esq., author and Professor of Law, Rutgers School of Law.

Soprano Jacquetta Young-Davis will open the program with a performance of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

"When we reflect on the struggle for equal rights for African Americans, we have a tendency to focus on the marches, sit-ins and protests that were carried out in the streets of Birmingham, Greensboro and Washington, D.C.," said Library Director Wilma J. Grey. "This exhibit and panel discussion will focus on the battles that were fought off the streets – in the courtroom. It will spotlight the legal victories that were as important as the protests taking place and pay tribute to the African American lawyers and judges who blazed a trail for future generations."

Funding for the Library's Black History Celebration and exhibit has been provided by a generous grant from the PNC Foundation.

"We are honored to support the Newark Public Library in highlighting the triumphs experienced by African Americans in the law and the judiciary," said Linda Bowden, northern New Jersey regional president, PNC. "Their vigilance and determination to challenge unjust laws in court have a lasting impact many decades later. Their example has inspired generations of Americans to follow their footsteps as we work to move further down the road toward inclusion and equality for all."

In addition to the opening night program, the Library is presenting several other panels and musical programs to mark its Black History celebration.

On Saturday, February 6 at from noon to 2 p.m. in the 4th floor Auditorium, the Library will show an interview with Judge Robert L. Carter that aired on New Jersey Network's (NJN) Due Process. In the video, Carter, 90, discusses his activism in the NAACP and his work with Thurgood Marshall, a celebrated civil rights attorney who later became the first African American Supreme Court Justice. Carter was born in Florida in 1917, but moved to Newark when he was an infant.

He attended Barringer High School and East Orange High School, graduating at the age of 16. Carter earned his legal degrees at Howard University and Columbia University. In 1941, he was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he experienced abject racism, instilling in him a lifelong commitment to fight discrimination.

After leaving the Army in 1944, he accepted a job to work as the chief legal assistant to Thurgood Marshall at the NAACP. Carter was part of the legal team that represented the NAACP when it appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown vs. Board of Education*. He is credited with using psychological and sociological studies to make the case that separate facilities were inherently not equal. Those studies demonstrated the harmful effects of segregation, which led the high court to call for an end to segregation in public schools.

Carter became legal counsel at the NAACP in 1955 and went on to argue 22 cases before the Supreme Court, winning 21 of them. In 1972, President Richard Nixon appointed him to the federal bench.

Sarah Carter Perry Brown, 106, will offer recipes and wisdom during a book signing on Saturday, February 13 from 1 to 3 p.m in Centennial Hall. In the book, *Aunt Sarah's Recipes For A Long and Spirited-Filled Life: Wisdom and Soulful Lessons From a 105-Year-Old Matriarch*, written by her great-niece, Caryl R. Lucas, Brown shares remedies and secrets for longevity and faith. Lucas will appear with Brown at the book signing.

Several prominent local judges and lawyers will gather Wednesday, February 24 from 6 to 8 p.m. in Centennial Hall to discuss their lives, the values that shaped

their legal careers and the struggles they have overcome. The discussion, *Dreams from Our Fathers*, will feature attorney Raymond Brown, Jr.; Judge Harold Fullilove, Sr.; Judge Harold Fullilove, Jr.; attorney Tamara Britt; Judge Julien X. Neals, corporation counsel for the City of Newark; Retired New York State Administrative Law Judge Felix R. Neals; and Judge Randolph Jackson, Justice of the Supreme Court of New York.

On Saturday, March 6, the Camille Thurman Quartet will be playing in Centennial Hall from noon to 2 p.m. Thurman, a New Yorker, has been playing saxophone since she was 14. She has performed at the 2009 International Women in Jazz Festival, the seventh annual Lady's Got Chops Jazz Festival and the Newark Bethany Baptist Church Jazz vespers. She is planning to release her first album soon.

One week later, Courtney Bryan, a native of New Orleans and her trio, the Courtney Bryan Trio will also play in Centennial Hall from noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 13.

All programs are free and open to the public. For more information or to arrange a tour of the exhibit, please call 973-733-5411. In case of inclement weather, please call 973-733-7800 to determine whether the Library is open.