

April 3-4, 2008

We Speak for Ourselves

A Poet, a Prophet, and Voices for the 21st Century

In 1964, Robert Penn Warren interviewed Martin Luther King, Jr. and many others for his historic volume *Who Speaks for the Negro?* On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities on the Vanderbilt campus, Vanderbilt and Fisk Universities are bringing together scholars and activists to revisit unresolved questions raised in Warren's book and by its provocative title. The group, including some of the people Warren interviewed, will look back at the history of the Black Freedom Movement, and look ahead to the ongoing quest for liberty, justice, and equality. This extraordinary gathering of minds will continue the much-needed conversation on justice and community, to which Warren the poet and writer lent his voice, and to which King the prophet gave his life.

Co-sponsors include: Vanderbilt's African American and Diaspora Studies Program, Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, Center for Ethics, Center for Nashville Studies, Department of English, the Law School, Office of the Provost, and Race Relations Institute of Fisk University

Additional support has been provided by American Studies Program, Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership, Center for the Study of Religion and Culture, Department of Communication Studies, Film Studies Program, Department of History, Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Department of Philosophy, Department of Political Science, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and Women's and Gender Studies Program.

For more information, call (615) 343-6060 or go to www.vanderbilt.edu/rpw_center.



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Thursday, April 3

**7 p.m. Bishop Joseph Johnson
Black Cultural Center Auditorium**

Faubourg Tremé: The Untold Story of Black New Orleans

View this fascinating documentary on life in an historic black neighborhood in New Orleans, before and after Hurricane Katrina. After the film, there will be a discussion with the writer, narrator, and producer of the film, Lolis Eric Elie, and his father, Lolis Elie, one of the activists Robert Penn Warren interviewed.

Friday, April 4

Noon Vanderbilt University Law School, Flynn Auditorium

**2008 Charles N. Burch Lecture
"We Are Not Now Living the Dream: Reverend Martin
Luther King, Jr. and Human Rights in the 21st Century"**

Angela Y. Davis, Professor of History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz

3 p.m. Vanderbilt University Law School, Flynn Auditorium

**Panel Presentation and Audience Discussion of
*Who Speaks for the Negro?***

Panelists include Warren interviewee Ruth Turner Perot Executive Director, Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.; Houston A. Baker, Distinguished University Professor of English, Vanderbilt University; Richard King, Professor of American Intellectual History, University of Nottingham.
Reception to follow

7:30 p.m. Fisk University Chapel

"Allowing a Living Past to Compel a Pregnant Now"

Keynote address by Reverend James M. Lawson, Distinguished Visiting Professor, Vanderbilt University

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Participants in this powerful event include: Houston A. Baker, Vanessa Beasley, Will Campbell, Angela Y. Davis, Lolis Elie, Lolis Eric Elie, Vincent Harding, Barbara A. Holmes, Joy James, Richard King, James Lawson, Irene Monroe, Robert P. Moses, Ruth Turner Perot, Alexia Salvatierra, Edwin Sanders, Daniel Sharfstein, Charles Sherrod, Melissa Snarr, and Wyatt Tee Walker.

You and a guest are invited to attend the opening reception
for the conference

**We Speak for Ourselves:
A Poet, a Prophet, and Voices for the 21st Century**

at the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities

Thursday, April 3rd

from 5:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.



RSVP by March 27, 2008 to (615) 343-6060

Co-sponsors include: Vanderbilt's Program in African American and Diaspora Studies, Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, Center for Ethics, Center for Nashville Studies, Department of English, the Law School, the Office of the Provost, and the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University.

Additional support has been provided by Vanderbilt's Program in American Studies, Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership, Center for the Study of Religion and Culture, Department of Communication Studies, Program in Film Studies, Department of History, Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Department of Philosophy, Department of Political Science, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and Program in Women's and Gender Studies.

THE ROBERT PENN WARREN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
presents

**We Speak for Ourselves:
A Poet, A Prophet, and Voices for the 21st Century**

EVENT SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, APRIL 3rd

7:00 p.m.

"Faubourg Tremé: The Untold Story of Black New Orleans," the premiere screening of this documentary about an historic black neighborhood in New Orleans. With commentary afterwards by filmmaker **Lolis Eric Elie** and his father, **Lolis Elie**, who was interviewed by Robert Penn Warren for his volume, *Who Speaks for the Negro?* The event will take place in the Black Cultural Center.

FRIDAY, APRIL 4th

12:00 p.m.

"We are Not Now Living the Dream: Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and Human Rights in the 21st Century," the opening address by **Angela Davis**, Professor of History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz. The talk will be held in the Flynn Auditorium of the Law School.

3:00 p.m.

A panel discussion related to Robert Penn Warren's 1965 volume *Who Speaks for the Negro?* Panelists include Warren interviewee **Ruth Turner Perot**, Executive Director, Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.; **Houston Baker**, Distinguished University Professor of English, Vanderbilt University; and **Richard King**, Professor of American Intellectual History, University of Nottingham. The event will take place in the Flynn Auditorium of the Law School, with a reception to follow.

7:30 p.m.

"Allowing a Living Past to Compel a Pregnant Now," the keynote address by **Reverend James M. Lawson**, Distinguished Visiting Professor at Vanderbilt University, will be held at the Fisk University Chapel.