UNH Black New England Conference Set For June 11-13

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UNH Black New England Conference Set For June 11-13

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This year's conference explores the contemporary as well as historic interactions between black and indigenous communities, the presence of "passing" mixed race individuals, and the more recent immigrant experience, within a New England context. These complex interactions, connections, conflicts, experiences, and resistant efforts of black, white, indigenous, and multi-racial citizens will be explored through scholarly research, presentations on books, shared personal stories, and imagery.

Award-winning author Lorene Cary will deliver the keynote address. Cary is best known in literary circles for her book "Black Ice," which she wrote about her two years boarding experience at St. Paul's School, a formerly all-white, all-male elite prep school in New Hampshire.

Local historians and scholars Valerie Cunningham and Linda Freeman will present, "Colors & Colorism," a presentation designed to facilitate reflection and discussion around internalized racism and hierarchies based on skin tone.

Artist Napoleon Jones-Henderson will offer a "spicy dialogue of visual delight" about the complexities of Creole identity. Mwalim (Morgan James Peters), performer and professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, will take the audience on a musical and storytelling journey through one Black Indian's experience in New England during his one-man show "You're an Indian?" Gretchen Quezaire-Presutti will also perform as the 19th century educator Sarah Harris.

In addition to opening with a screening and discussion of the film, "The Human Stain," the conference will feature nationally known figures, contemporary writers, and artists whose work places New England on the map of African American life. Distinguished scholars will explore New England's multi-faceted and layered African American history, literature, and culture through a series of panels that will examine such issues and figures as black soldiering, Dorothy West's writings, Walden Pond, womanist ideology, mixed-blood ancestry, passing, changing notions of blackness, and laws on interracial marriage and education.

The deadline to register is May 21, 2009. For further information and registration, visit www.neculture.org or email JerriAnne Boggis, director of diversity programs and community outreach, at jerrianne.boggis@unh.edu or David Watters, director of the UNH Center for New England Culture, at david.watters@unh.edu.

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