



Patricia Smith Headlines UNH Black New England Conference

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Patricia Smith, nationally known slam-poet, novelist, biographer, and children's book author, will present the keynote address at the University of New Hampshire Center for New England Culture Black New England Conference, "Black New England Stories: Literature, Art, and Oratory."

The two-day conference begins Friday, June 13, 2008, and will be held in the Memorial Union Building and Holloway Commons. This year's conference will focus broadly on forms of black expression and black creativity in New England. Through the stories of well known as well as little known authors and artists, presenters will explore how literature, art or oratory was and is used by blacks to discuss issues of the day.

In "Resurrecting Necessary Breath," Smith will explore the unyielding spiritual linkage of ancestry and family in a presentation that mixes memoir, poetry, and the history connecting us all. It will include original images of 19th century black New Englanders from her extensive private collection. The presentation begins at 7 p.m. in Memorial Union Building Theater I. A reception will follow. The event is free and open to the public.

Smith is a four-time national individual champion of the National Poetry Slam and has appeared on the award-winning HBO series "Def Poetry Jam." In October of 2006, she was inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent. She is currently writing a young adult novel, "The Journey of Willie J." and "Fixed on a Furious Star," a biography of Harriet Tubman. Her works include "Teahouse of the Almighty" (Coffee House Press), "Close to Death" (Zoland Books), "Big Towns, Big Talk" (Z land), "Life According to Motown" (Tia Chucha), and "Africans in America" (Harcourt Brace), a companion volume to the groundbreaking four-part PBS history series.

The conference features an array of nationally known creative writers, artists, and scholars who will explore New England's stories of African American life from colonial days to the present. There is a \$50 registration fee for conference events other than the keynote address. For a complete list of conference participants and seminars, visit <http://www.unh.edu/users/unh/acad/libarts/cnec/bnec08.html>.

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