

ROBERT PENN WARREN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES PRESENTS

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 the 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.



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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

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.