

PRESS RELEASE:

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MEDIA ALERT –

AFTERNOON WITH AUTHORS Event Celebrates African American Writers

Douglasville, Georgia – The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is pleased to announce the first book signing and reading of the 2011 “Afternoon with Authors” series. Organized by the Douglas County Connection, this Black History Month event features African American writers living and working in Georgia, at the Cultural Arts Center on Sunday, February 20th, from 2 until 5 p.m. Autographed copies of the participating writers will be available for sale during the afternoon’s literary soiree. The event is free and open to the general public.

“We have a lot of variety and talent this year,” commented Janet Payne of the DC Connection. “It is going to be a lively afternoon!” Participating writers include children’s book author Mona L. Scott who lives in Powder Springs and who developed “The Dream Keeper: Me!” project which is a positive self- image workshop program for youth and teens. The wonderfully illustrated, *Nappy Sunrae Crown*, about a little girl considering all the ways African Americans have treated their hair, is her first children’s picture book. Educator Ann Davis from Charleston, West Virginia, who taught in Massachusetts and historian Lawrence Jackson who wrote *The Indignant Generation: A Narrative History of African American Writers and Critics* (Princeton 2010) and *Ralph Ellison: Emergence of Genius, 1913-1952* (Wiley 2002) are among the other authors featured. With a doctorate degree in English and American literature from Stanford University, Professor Jackson has held fellowships from the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute at Harvard University, the Stanford Humanities Center, the Ford Foundation, and the National Humanities Center. He began his teaching career at Howard University in 1997 and he is now Professor of English and African American Studies at Emory University. His current project is a biography of Chester Himes.

Douglas County poet and author Renee Sparks, author of “Brown Fire,” has She served as a managing editor, contributor and staff writer for various magazines, been a panelist for the Fulton County Arts Council, and collaborated with artist Patti Hackett in the presentation, “Strong Branch, Weak Tree,” featured in galleries in Atlanta, New York and other cities. Sparks served as Advocacy Education Director with Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; as a Prevention and Intervention Education Specialist, she provided training to soldiers on the Department of Defense sexual assault policies and procedures prior to their deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. She has presented at state and national conferences, participated as a panelist on sexual violence, and served on Washington State Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force. Ms. Sparks has written two additional books that will be released for publication soon and is presently writing a third book on innovative lessons she acquired while working directly with children on bullying, harassment and sexual assault issues.

Douglas County-based storyteller Douglas County-based storyteller Ursula Renee Spratling, better known as Auntie Renee, will tell African and African American folk tales from 2 until 3 p.m. during the February “Afternoon with Authors,” as will children’s author Mona Scott. Spoken word poet Byron Donaldson will add a great performance to this wonderful afternoon of diverse literary expressions.

The “Afternoon with Authors” series will continue with a reading and book signing by Mississippi-born historian Sylvia Krebs who has just published her memoir, *How Am I to Touch with You? Encounters with China*, and who has taught at the University of West Georgia, Georgia Perimeter College, Agnes Scott College and Nanjiang Teachers University in China, on Sunday, March 27th, and concludes on Sunday, April 17th, with a reading by Douglas County-based poet Carlene Tejada from her book, *Blue Pearls*, published last year. Ms. Tejada teaches English as a Second Language, in which she holds an M.A. She has had her writing published in *North Dakota Review*, *The New England Review*, *The Poet’s Touchstone*, *The Burning Cloud Review*, and *White Pelican Review*.

The mission of the Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is to nurture, guide and stimulate the enjoyment of and participation in the arts among Douglas County residents by providing an atmosphere conducive to the arts, broadening the spectrum of quality exhibits and performances available to the community, and fostering individual interactions with the arts through a wide range of satellite organizations. The Cultural Arts Council and its programs are supported by its members, sponsors, the City of Douglasville, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, and Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations from the State General Assembly. The GCA is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes a great nation deserves great art.

The Cultural Arts Center is located at 8652 Campbellton Street in historic downtown Douglasville, Georgia, located about 20 miles from Atlanta and just off I-20 (exit 36). Hours of operation are Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please call 770/949-2787 or visit our web site --- www.artsdouglas.org.