# Dr. Hollis edits books on Afro-American literature

By Frederick I. Douglass

"Swords Upon This Hill" transcends being a mere anthology of contemporary writers with its synergistic, collective battle cry for all black intellectuals, artists, and intellegentsia to strap on their sabres to fight for the right to define our own viable esthetic tradition.

This is particularly important in an era when white essayists seem to be the only ones whose articles about ebony authors get printed in publications that enjoy wide distribution and when white institutions are rapidly usurping the role of our colleges and universities as the preeminent publishers of scholarly books and journals about ourselves.

Inconceivable?

Not when you consider the fact black critics have been relegated to roles of considerably less than minor prophets in their efforts to define and edify the meaning of jazz because the editors of America's daily newspapers, magazines and even the publications solely devoted to the subject eschew sepia writers and prefer to print the views of whites. Consider the fact that the major books on Jazz artists like Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Billie Holliday and the "Encyclopedia of Jazz" are by whites. Who are the essayists that pass judgement in print on the paintings of Romare Bearden, the photographs of Gordon Parks and James Van Derzee, the movies and play of Melvin Van Peebles, and the soulful music of Prince, the Temptations, Four Tops, George Clinton, Herbie Hancock and Michael Jackson? Usually, they are white.

At first glance, it looks like we black folks are on the verge of becoming esthetically extinct. Yet there is still hope that we can preserve the last bastion of black esthetics because there is a hard working cadre of authors, poets and playwrights who are dedicated to winning this battle. Some of these soldiers gathered at Morgan State University April 8-9, 1983 to participate in the first annual Nick Aaron Ford—Waters Edward Turpin Symposium on Afro-American Literature which explored the theme "Preserving the Literary Tradition of Black Colleges and Universities."

Sponsored by the Martin and Elizabeth Jenkins Lecture Fund, the symposium is named in memory of two Morgan professors of English who gleamed brightly for several decades as major figures in Afro-American literature and scholarship. The annual symposium is designed to bring together black writers, editors, publishers, program directors, scholars and members of the reading audience to engage in discussions about the past, present and future of the Afro-American literary tradition. Additionally, the symposium is constructed to provide intellectual cross fertilization between aspiring journalists and scholars who are seeking to gather guidance and a sense of purpose from their seasoned and distinguished elders who have studied and perpetuated literary excellence over the years.

Bringing together the various papers presented by the various scholars whose presence electrified the Ford-Turpin Symposium, "Swords Upon This Hill" is a powerful call to action for those who are concerned about the future status of black literature and its creators.

Dr. Burney J. Hollis, Chairperson of Morgan State University's English Dept., is the editor of "Swords Upon This Hill", a book on preserving the Black Literary Tradition.

Succinctly analyzing the contemporary status of black literature tradition, Dr. Burney J. Hollis, the editor of "Swords Upon This Hill" states "...White institutions have begun to reap the benefits of the labor of black literary pioneers. They have begun to rival black institutions that they have used, but not aknowledged as stepping stones in their advancements in black studies. Their programs are standing on the shoulders of giants whom they ignore without even a perfunctory nod toward their contributions.

Second, this situation is alarming because increasing white scholars and white institutions are beginning, once again to define the black experience...Most alarming is the fact that white critics writing on black literature tend to disparage black critics—even the Founding Fathers—and to support their literary thesis with arguments by other white critics exclusively."

Echoing the words of Dr. Hollis in a paper entitled "The Preservation of the Black Past," Addison Gayle, Jr., states that we must analyze what has happened to our culture in the past so that we can make appropriate, aggressive plans for the future." From our vantage point in the twentieth century, we know now the havoc wreaked upon African culture by European colonizers and slave traders.

But we are not always so cognizant of the fierce battle waged by the people in defense of their cultural artifacts. But a people, once cognizant of a group identity, does not easily surrender its sustaining and nourishing cultures. The colonists discovered that their guns and bibles were not enough to destroy the African identity, that people armed with little more, oftentimes, than remembrances of things, events and (the) past held out for centuries, some never surrendering to European and American cultural hegemony."

Being at the Ford-Turpin Symposium to hear impressive presentations by Addison Gayle, Jr., John Oliver Killens, Sonia Sanchez, Richard A. Long and Therman B. O'Daniel and to be totally immersed in the intellectually galvanized cultural milieu that permeated Morgan's campus on those two rainy days in April, was a most enriching experience. Hearing the reflections of Dr. Andrew Billingsly, Ralph Reckley, Sr., Dr. Burney J. Hollis, Eugenia Collier, and Dr. Ruth T. Sheffey as they reminisced about the integal roles of Dr. Nick Aaron Ford and Dr. Waters Edward Turpin in perpetuating the black literary tradition, strongly reinforced reverence of these two man who inspired me to pursue my interest in writing when I was under their tutelage at Morgan during the late 1960's.

Listening to the powerful imagery embodied in the words of Sonia Sanchez, Stephen C. Wright and Julia Fields during their poetry salon evoked the spirits of Contee Cullen, Paul Laurence Dunbar and Lanston Hughes. And reading the drama, fiction and poetry of Joyce Brown, Russell Ramos, Frederick Sean Perretta, Julia I. Dryden, Preston Vismale—the students who won the Ford-Turpin Creative Writing Contest — reaffirmed that a fiery literary spirit still burns within the souls of our youthful writers.

So let us stand firmly behind the efforts to preserve our literary tradition by joining the strong coterie of black intellectuals who are standing upon the hill with their swords drawn, ready to do battle or whatever else is necessary to preserve our cultural heritage.

And while we cannot, nor should we necessarily try to stop the rapidly expanding interest of white critics and scholars in black literature, we should not entrust them with the sole responsibility for educating us and preserving our literary tradition concludes Dr. Nick Aaron Ford who once said to me during an interview "...according to my research and personal observations, the discovery of many advanced non-white cultures by anthropologists has not altered the life style or mode of thought of the average white man. In fact, they have ignored or totally suppressed the cultures of other people. This is why black studies is such a viable concept, one which makes information about black people and black culture available to all students...A person at any level of education who knows nothing about the achievements of black men and women is truly miseducated."

# Dr. Whalum conducts for Union Baptist

## Music notes

Union Baptist Church presents their combined choirs in "A Homecoming Concert" of Great Anthems of the Church with Dr. Wendell P. Whalum of Morehouse College, Atlanta as guest conductor. The affair will be held at the church Sunday, Oct. 7 at 5 p.m.

Wendell Whalum graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis in 1948, and earned the Bachelor of Arts degree from Morehouse College in 1952. He received the Master of Arts degree from Columbia University in 1953 and the Ph.-D. degree from the University of Iowa in 1965. In 1968 he was the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Music degree from the University of Haiti.

Since 1953 Dr. Whalum has been Professor of Music at Morehouse. He has also served as Chairman of the Department of Music. In 1974 he was named Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Music.

Dr. Whalum is Director of the Morehouse College Glee Club, Co-Director of the Morehouse-Spelman Chorus, and Director of Music at Ebenezer Baptist Church. In 1968 as Conductor of the world renowned Morehouse College Glee Club, he prepared the members for a performance with the National Orchestra, Warner Lawson conducting in memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., at Lincoln Monument, Washington, D.C. Under his leadership the Glee Club has continued its tradition of excellence, appearing nationally and internationally before overflow crowds.

Because of his unusual ability and deep interest in music, Dr. Whalum is much sought after as a consultant by churches, foundations, and other organizations. He has served as Chairman of the Festival of Contemporary Music at the Atlanta University Center in conjunction with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, as coordinator of the Atlanta Symphony Program and Intercollegiate Chorus for the Institutions of Higher Learning in Atlanta, as consultant to the Ford Foundation's Education and Research Division, as a member of the Planning Committee for the Protestant and Catholic Colleges and Universities Convocation, as a member of the Board of the Atlanta Opera Company. He has also served as vice-president and president of the Intercollegiate Musical Council.

Wintley Phipps along with Jackie Blake, flautist and Dr. Lafayette Singleton, violinist will be presented in concert at St. Marks' Methodist Church, Sunday, Nov. 18 at 5 p.m. Rev. Bernard Keels is pastor; Mack B. Simpson, Minister of Music.

Artists to End Hunger and the Baltimore Committee for World Food Day will present a concert on Monday, Oct. 15 at 8:15 p.m. in the sanctuary of St. Dominic's Church, 5310 Harford Road.

This concert will feature a world premiere of a work by Baltimore composer Elizabeth Anderson, Renaissance and Baroque music sung by the St. Dominic Choir, and the Haydn Concerto in D Major for harpsichord and orchestra. Performers will include harpsichordist William Fitzgerald, soprano Donna Pierce, and conductor Ann Harrigan.

The evening will be a benefit for the Maryland Food Committee. Tickets can be reserved by phone or bought at the door for a minimum tax-deductible contribution of $5 each ($3 for students and senior citizens), and children 12 and under may be admitted with the donation of one or more cans of food. For reservations or more information call 332-0123.

# Pratt Happenings

Lectures

"Passion in Poe: The Development of a Critical Term" will be the subject of the 62nd annual Edgar Allan Poe lecture scheduled at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 7, at the Central Enoch Pratt Free Library, 400 Cathedral St.

The speaker will be Glen Allan Omans, professor of English and American studies at Temple University.

The October 7 commemorative program on Poe will began at 1:30 p.m. with the laying of wreaths on Poe's tomb in the Westminster churchyard, Fayette and Greene Streets.

The Poe lecture, co-sponsored by the library and the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, will be given in the Pratt Library's Wheeler Auditorium and will be followed by an informal reception in the Poe room, with refreshments furnished by the English Department and English club of the University of Baltimore and the Poe society.

Admission to the afternoon's events is free. The public is invited to attend and to join the Baltimore Chapter of the Poe society.

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AFRO Clean Block notes:

# Put your garden to be for winter

By Pamela B. King
Extension Agent

Now, while the weather is cool and comfortable, put your garden to bed for the winter. Remember to:

— Plant perennial rhubarb October 15 through November 15.

— Plant bulbs for a spring display.

— Pot up herbs and ornamental plants like parsley, chives, coleus and begonias to bring indoors for the winter. Cut the plants back and let them get used to their pots outdoors for a week or two before bringing them in. Be sure to find them a bright window.

— Continue to harvest and preserve fall crops.

— Remove spent flowers and plants from the garden. Compost those without insects or diseases and pack the rest in plastic bags for the trash collector.

— Mulch over and protect hardy crops such as greens, so the harvest period will last longer.

— Make any structural changes such as leveling, building raised beds, or other projects.

— Take a soil test and add any limestone needed to the soil, so it will break down and do its job by spring. Wait until spring to fertilize.

— Add organic matter such as compost, leaves, grass clippings, etc. to improve the condition of your soil.

— Turn the soil roughly to expose insects and diseases to the cold.

— Mow tall grasses around the garden before they go to seed and use them, or other materials, to mulch the ground after it begins to freeze to prevent erosion.

— Make compost.

Now, sit back and wait for your seed catalogues to arrive and start planning for next year's garden.

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