



SPREAD THE WORD

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Spring, 2007

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Mother Mary Carter Smith Joined the Ancestors on April 24, 2007



Stories on pages 3 and 4

Excitement building for Atlanta 2007

By Dylan Pritchett
NABS President

Jambo NABS Members! I'm starting to get excited! Excited about our 25th Anniversary celebration in Atlanta. Excited about where we are as an organization. Excited about the possibilities!

Our founders, Mother Mary Carter Smith and Linda Goss have sojourned us on the path which we are attempting to pave into a road.

Their vision, spirit and love have shown us the power, reverence, sacrifice and necessity of creating a platform for Black storytelling. What an awesome journey they've shown us in the past 25 years.



Dylan Pritchett

The celebration of our 25th anniversary as an organization is such an honor to be able to present. Some storytelling organizations have come and gone...we're still here! We're still here because of a whole lot of prayer, our founders' constant vision, honoring our ancestral legacy, organizational leadership, persistence, focus and **you**, our members' talent and financial support!

As your new President, I am grateful to those who have served NABS in the many capacities throughout the years. Past Board members, Presidents, committee members, attendees to our festivals and conferences and those on the membership roll have made it possible for reaching 25 years.

There have been many hours of planning and heart wrenching work that has gone into getting us this far. For all of you that have served in the past and given of yourselves from the stage to the audience, Affiliate officers and the NABS Board....Thank You!

Also, I am grateful to those who are presently serving to chart NABS' future. Our present Board of Directors represent a vast range of expertise. The many Festival Committees, led by Festival

Director Vanora Legaux, Co-Director Akbar Imhotep and KUUMBA Storytellers of Georgia are fervently striving to make our celebration in Atlanta the most memorable Festival & Conference ever!

Our affiliates and their officers are dutifully carrying forth their mission in "Spreading the Word." We're at a good place! Moving forward is where we are. Why? Look at the names listed in your membership directory. Awesome membership!

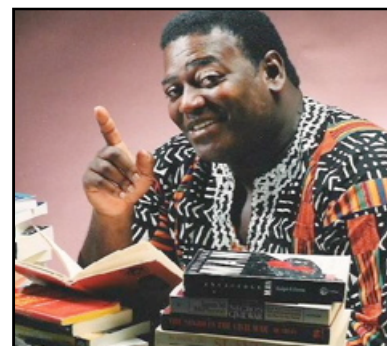
Take a look at the Board of Directors and notice the talent assembled. We're moving forward in securing our financial future with our newly appointed National Fund Development chairman, T.N. Nokware Adesegun; our newly appointed National Public Relations chairman, "Madafo" Lloyd Wilson; our newly appointed Membership Committee chairwoman, "Mama" Edie Armstrong; with the ongoing expertise of our Executive Director, Linda Brown and our National Directors Baba Jamal Koram (Affiliate), Queen Nura (AATP) and Elisha Minter (Youth).

With these great minds and spirits within the organization working together, how could we stagnate? Pray for NABS! Pray for our ancestors to give thanks and give us guidance. Send up some "timber" for Mother Mary Carter Smith and Linda Goss.

Pray for those still struggling and displaced by Katrina (it ain't over yet!), for our brothers and sisters that still need to hear a story. Pray for our incarcerated kin, our children and each other! Pray for that story...that one story...that someone needs to hear! And after all that prayer...

SEE YOU IN ATLANTA!

Asante Sana!



Mother Mary Carter Smith is now an Ancestor

April 24, 2007, around 4:30 pm, Mother Griot, Mother Mary Carter Smith made her transition.

Even as Mother Mary makes her final journey, we, who have loved her so, will forever feel her spirit and remember her friendly smile, gentle touch and story.

Mother Mary, as she is affectionately known, touched the heart and souls of everyone who knew her and many who just knew of her. Her presence was a gift, for she willingly, without hesitation, like a mother caring for her children strove to inspire and share her stories of love with everyone she met. She was/is an angel.

In the true sense of the meaning of "Griot," Mother Mary excelled. She traveled around the world telling her stories to kings and queens and everyone who would listen. With her stories, she motivated youth and elder alike. She was a teacher in the Baltimore City Public School system for thirty-one years and volunteered her services hosting a Saturday morning radio program, "Griot for the Young and the Young at Heart," for twenty-five years. And, in 1983 Mother Griot was named the official Griot of Baltimore, MD.

Twenty-five years ago, along with Linda Goss,

Mother Mary founded The National Association for Black Storytellers, Inc. was awarded the Zora Neale Hurston Award in 1985, received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Storytelling Association in 1996 and has written countless numbers of books of poetry and stories. Her achievements are just too numerous to list here. Please, visit www.nabsinc.org for more up to date information.

Mother Mary Carter Smith was a visionary, poet, teacher, Historian, chronicler of the values and principles of the people. With her inspiration, storytelling continues to be an important voice in this global community; a voice that spoke of God's Love, Peace and Understanding between the peoples of the world.

In her words: "As I live my 82nd year and I look back, I am amazed how God has guided me and kept me. I have enjoyed these years and, anything others think that I have done, that is worthwhile, is the outgrowth of trying as best I know how to share with others the love that god has shown me. God has been constant in the valleys and on the mountain tops."

– Lloyd "Madafo" Wilson

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SPREAD THE WORD!!

25TH Anniversary

"In the Tradition..." National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference

"Our Roots, Our Story, Our Dreams, Our Glory!"

The Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel

Atlanta, Georgia

November 14 – 18, 2007

Sponsored by National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc.

Hosted by Kuumba Storytellers of Georgia

Festival Director Vanora Legaux

Festival Co-Director Akbar Imhotep

NABS Office – 410-947-1117

NABS Website – www.NABSinc.org

Mother Mary exuded Love

By Dylan Pritchett

Mother Mary Carter Smith exuded what we feel just by

reading or hearing her name. How can we even think of any word other than LOVE when we think of her?



Don't try...you can't!

Listening to Mother Mary was enthralling as was with fellow Founder Mama Linda Goss. Her passion was consistent. Her words and mind was clear with jubilation toward NABS and storytelling. Constantly there was an undercurrent of theme...and that was, unsurprisingly, love!

Mother Mary was unshakable while talking about Black storytelling. 'Keep Black storytelling alive!' she urged. 'Oral telling. It will raise our pride!' she blurted.

Mother Mary didn't stop there. She continued, 'Don't let our tradition die. Spread it in the churches, workplace, lodges,

fraternities and sororities. If done, there is no compensation and done under the auspices of NABS.'

The love of storytelling is what she urges. No matter what cost or sacrifice. Then, Mother Mary went on. 'Unless **WE** keep it alive, on whose shoulders should it rest? We owe it to our ancestors. That's all we have sometimes. That's all we could do sometimes. Celebrate our scary tales, jokes, chant and response, verse speaking, children's stories. However, we want to get the idea out of heads that storytelling is just for children.'

Finally, she took a breath. It was a long breath. But, the silence was short lived as she went on. But, this time Mother Mary was more solemn; more ancestrally reflective and in respectful tone. 'Giving back is what NABS is about. For all the things we've been given. For all our ancestors have toiled. For what our ancestors have shared and given all they had... sometimes they'd be beaten to get together just to tell!' But, they

still told!

Moments later, Mother Mary entrusted her thoughts on why there was a need to establish what we know now as NABS. 'We want to stress our oral traditions.' There were minutes of discussion which can be summarized by only saying that the mission should always center around the "blackness" of the stories we tell, how we tell those stories, and the importance of keeping the "black" in Black storytelling!

Mother Mary's love for our/her ancestors, NABS, it's members and those who have toiled to make our organization a reality is real. She's real. HER story is real.

Let's show each other a little bit of what Mother Mary has given us when we arrive in Atlanta.

Let's gently hug each other, give gentle kisses, and shower each other with a little "Mother Mary"...evoking her spirit with love!

Leaders Are Visionary

"Anyone can steer the ship but it takes a real leader to chart the course."

George Barna

Leaders not only have an eye on the horizon, they can see just beyond it.

Their firm grasp of the present is based on their never-ending hope for the future. They

can deal with things as they are because they have dreamed of what they can be.

One of the marks of leadership is the ability to look beyond the immediate to a better, brighter tomorrow.

Leaders are not satisfied with the status quo. They have an inner desire for the next level.

Time and inconvenience are mere pawns to be moved toward the ultimate capture. Leaders imagine a future that is better

than the present—and they look for ways to make it happen.

Leaders are not that interested in what's happening now. They're more interested in what's happening next.

"Minute Motivators For Leaders," by Stan Toler

Copyright c 2002 by Stan Toler

Published by RiverOak Publishing

Mama Linda Goss, NABS co-founder, is a jewel

By Dylan Pritchett

Cofounder Linda Goss is a jewel! How BLESSED we are.

Her dedication to always place homage to our ancestors first and foremost and “calling down” the spirit toward keeping the Tradition alive is undeniable. In a recent conversation with Mama Goss, I was struck by her untireless want for words in expressing her feelings about the initial intent, mission and future of NABS.

Mama Linda grew up on stories. She recalls times of when her mother, father, grandfather and others would sit around a tell stories. As life has it, she was influenced by her time and work at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

‘ In the seventies I was involved in the Black Power Movement, the Black Arts Movement, surrounded by Black book stores and a whole lot of Black people. I felt wonderful around Black folks. After listening constantly to progressive thinkers and teachers like Amiri Baraka, Sterling Brown and others, I started reading. I noticed there was a lot on music, dance, art, etc. but nothing on Black storytelling. I felt like I could do something. Telling stories was my way. This is what I can do!’??‘Our storytelling organization was started to serve as a platform for Black storytellers to take the stage. We got a story to tell..we’re gonna tell it! We own stories. Black storytelling is no different than our music, our paintings or our crafts. There was



Mama Linda Goss

a time when there was no organization that featured Black storytelling, showcasing Black storytellers or even having our stories published as we pen and speak them. We are where we are now because we’ve given members training, confidence, strength to tell, legitimacy, opportunities to highlight themselves, even publishing opportunities to do that. Our survival is tied to our goals and integrity!’??‘My concern with Black storytelling is that now the platform has been created, the emphasis seems to be shifting a bit to performance. People are now traveling, making a living and there’s nothing wrong with that. But, along the journey we need to always remember to reconnect to story! Remember those hand clapping rhythms and pass it on to children so they can pass it on. Recall those Br’er Rabbit stories and pass it on. Insist storytelling be in the school curriculum so we can pass it on. Go back to our grass roots. Help people find

their stories and storytellers. Stories are everywhere! And remember to keep it vibrant. Black storytelling is intended to be joyful. Laughter, music, ceremony and audience participation must be included in the celebration of Black story!’??A poignant moment was when Mama Linda spoke of her grandfather. His job on a plantation was to blow the bugle in the morning to call the people from slumber to work. When she began the storytelling “walk” he said, ‘ You’re waking up the people.’ So, come to attention when you hear Linda Goss’s bells rattling and the call is heard, ‘It’s storytelling time!’ It’s not just a strong sister making a racket. It’s an involuntary, ancestral call coming through her. A mission. A lifetime of being. A whole bunch of awakening about to be passed on...In The Tradition!??So much wisdom....so much history....so much spirit! I can’t do justice to what was shared. But, I guarantee you, when you see Mama Linda Goss in Atlanta this November you will be able to spot her by her glow....by her smile....and by her love! Stop and “Thank” her for her vision, for her wise guidance, for urging us to WAKE UP for 25 years and for just being who she is!!



Meet the new NABS board members

Nashid Ali Upper Darby, PA

Nashid is a social worker at Children's Service, Inc. (CSI), one of America's first historically Black child welfare agencies. With 16 years work experience with CSI, Nashid has gained experience in the areas of development and marketing. He has represented CSI on the Philadelphia /Camden Empowerment Zone Community Trust Board and Philadelphia's Neighborhood Bike Works Board of Directors. In addition to social work, Nashid is a jeweler, storyteller, Past President of Keepers of the Culture (4 years), and presently holds the office of KOTC Treasurer. Nashid earned his Master in Sociology degree at Northwestern University.

Togunde Nantambu Nokware Adesegun Snellville, GA

Nokware, a licensed Attorney, serves as the Director, Research Grants Administration, School of Public Policy, Georgia Institute of Technology. He has managed several large-scale grant programs, including a 27 million dollar higher education reform initiative funded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in collaboration with the National Science Foundation. He has worked

with community based programs and institutions of higher education in developing successful grant and contract proposals having secured 15 million dollars in the last six years. Nokware earned his Juris Doctorate degree at the University of Maryland School of Law.

Tahira Dorsey Claymont, DE

TAHIRA has been a full-time professional storyteller since 1996. She conducts workshops, artist in residency and teaching artist programs for schools and community organizations. In 2000, TAHIRA received the Delaware Division of Arts Artist Fellowship in Oral Literature. She has written and performed 5 original stories on debut album, entitled Gifted Children, followed by 2nd CD entitled, Rise to Freedom. She has performed in over 100 cities throughout the nation and is a past President of KOTC.



Tahira Dorsey

Mary Ann Harris East Cleveland, OH

Mary Ann is an educator in Professional and Grants Development, Cleveland

Municipal Schools, and a Grant Reviewer and Project Manager consultant for the U.S. Dept. of Education. She received a U.S.



Mary Ann Harris

Fulbright Group Project in Southern Africa in 2001. Mary Ann is a past President of CABS. Her Doctorate degree in Education was earned at Nova Southeastern University

Akbar Imhotep Atlanta, GA

Akbar is a self employed storyteller, puppeteer, and poet. He performs at schools, libraries, churches and special events in Metro Atlanta and throughout the southeast. Akbar currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Community Centers for Unity and Self Determination and is President of KUUMBA. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Paine College where he now serves as Executive Secretary and Membership Chair for the National Alumni Association.



Ruminations of the “In the Tradition... 24th Annual National Black Storytelling Festival & Conference

By Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley

The theme Walkin’, Talkin’ and Shoutin’ All the Way to the Ocean” was truly connected throughout the festival and conference. The host affiliate, the Black Storytellers of San Diego, Inc (BSSD) under the direction and guidance of the Co-Festival Director, Dr. Annjennette McFarlin and the Artistic Director, T. Ford went beyond the second mile to include special events and programming to blend the cultural zest of the West Coast.

Coordinated efforts, time, talents and resources of the National Festival Director, Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley, Co-Festival Director, Dr. Annjennette McFarlin, NABS Board of Directors, members of the Host Affiliate and volunteers were achieved to ensure that the members, friends and guests of NABS would have a meaningful and stimulating experience throughout the festival/conference.

The local programming started with a Pre-Conference event on Saturday, November 11, 2006, Veterans Day, with the distinguish guests Tim and Daphne Reid. Mr. Reid shared our story and showed excerpts from the award- winning American Legacy Magazine DVD collection, “Blacks in the



From left, Danny “SlapJazz” Barber, Shirley Jackson and Benson Deng, a Lost Boy of Sudan.

Military” of the World War II Black Army soldiers in Alaska who built the Alaska/Canadian (Alcan) Highway. In addition, personal stories and history were told by some of the local chapter of the Buffalo Soldiers. The event was absolutely inspiring and quite informative.

Our annual pre-festival African American Tour was sponsored by the host affiliate at no cost to the festival/conference registrants to travel to Campo, CA to visit the African American Railroad Heritage’s Jim Crow car, artifacts and photo display. Afterwards, the tour continued to Julian, CA where the famous Julian Apple Pie originated. We were treated to a complimentary slice of Julian apple pie. We really heard some wonderful stories as we traveled up the mountains.

The call to celebration on the opening night was led by the West African Drumming and Dance Group called Tesachosan followed by the Native American Indian group named Jackie Nunez and family. The opening was high energy with a spiritual essence.



Leland “Spoonful” Collins

Cont’d on next page

“Walkin’, Talkin’ and Shoutin’ All the Way to the Ocean”



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The general assemblies featured the Human Hambone and the Lost Boys of the Sudan. The historical film of *The Human Hambone* traced the journey of rhythm from its African roots to America illustrating the use of the human body as a musical instrument. The live demonstrations by Danny “Slapjazz” Barber illustrating body percussion and Leland “Spoonful” Collins demonstrating the use of spoons electrified the audience. The story of the Lost Boys of Sudan was shared by Benson Deng of the Dinka Tribe of Southern Sudan. He talked about their harrowing experience of escape from Africa to America. He also performed an instrumental song on his unique African instrument.

One of the most spiritual and rejuvenating experience was the Oceanside Breakfast on Saturday morning at the Hotel del Coronado. During the Champagne Buffet breakfast Asha Baba, the storyteller, delighted everyone as he serenaded members with the mellow sounds of his Kora. After breakfast the program continued outside by the Pacific Ocean for the special ocean-side ceremony and celebration.

You had to be there to witness the jubilant spirit during the Zora Neale Hurston banquet. Honoring the jazz greats, Clara Bryant, a female trumpet player and Jeannie and Jimmie Cheatham of the Sweet Baby Blues Bands, who are highly respected in the jazz circles all over the world, was truly a highlight. Their spontaneous participation during the program illustrated their appreciation of the award and their love for

jazz. The Robinson jazz band sung Jeannie Cheatham signature song *Meet Me With Your Black Drawers On* as tribute to her. During the band leader’s rendition of the song Jeannie asked for the mic and took the song to higher heights. The Robinson Jazz Band rock the house to the point the members got up and started dancing all over the room.

The storytelling concerts, village telling, and preview stage presented throughout the week starting from the Pre-Festival Storytelling Concert on Wednesday night through Sunday morning Spiritual Breakfast exemplified the true essence of what the oral tradition is all about. The versatility in presentation, style and creativity kept the spirit of stories in

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From left, Jamal Koram, Linda Brown, Shekinah Perkins.

24th Festival featured many guests



Jackie Nunez and family at opening ceremonies

Cont'd from previous page

high gear. The featured tellers were Victoria Burnett, Danielle Daniel, Lyn ford, Jamal Koram, Joanna Maddox, Michael D. McCarty, Elisha “Mother” Minter, Thelma S. Robinson and Sadarri Saskill. The Pre Festival storytellers consisted of Peter Barrett, Linda Brown, Oba William King, Annjennette McFarlin, Clarence Mollock, Shekinah Perkins, and Quraysh Ali Lansana.

The informative presentations and discussion of the oral traditions of the African Diaspora by the Scholars Panel presenters Ross, Talarico, Stephanie Smallwood, PhD, and RJ Smith generated great questions and dialogue with the audience.

The youth programs planned and coordinated by T. Ford and our new National Youth Director, Elisha Minter touched over 1,000 children during the festival/conference. The off-site programs were held at Southwestern College and at the University of San Diego.

Kadir Nelson illustrator for the book *Thunder Rose* by Jerdine Nolen presented his award-winning illustrations and our own NABS storyteller, Valerie Tutson told the tall tale about a cowgirl in the Old West with more mettle than you can imagine. The title song “Thunder Rose” was written and performed by Miko Marks, Country Singer, for special presentation during the festival/conference.

What a cultural musical journey we traveled at the University of San Diego, when Michele Wood

(Painter) and Toyomi Igus (text) presented the Coretta Scott King award-winning book “I see the Rhythm” by poetic text, dance, music, song and art representing various timelines through the history of music. The C. Anthony Cole Dance Troupe performed dances representing time periods with much precision and vitality.

Winners of the BSSD Youth Storytelling Contest told stories from the heart during the onsite Youth Concert that was held at the hotel on Saturday, November 18, 2006. There was hardly a dry eye in the place.

NABS was honored to induct the gracious, warm and wise Mattie Clark into our esteemed Elder’s Circle. Special recognition was given to members who became life members. This year nine members received their Life Membership Award. The recipients were Charles Edward, Brown, Beverly Cottman, Wanda Gigetts, Steven H. Hobbs, Diane Y. Macklin, Ruthie McIntyre, Lee Riley, Robert A. Smith, Jr. and Carolyn Tonic-Robinson.

The Liar’s Contest is never a dull moment. Laughter, laughter, laughter was heard as youth and adults competed in telling the tallest tall tale. Our winners were: First Place-Bob Smith, Second Place-Esther Culver and Third Place-Sylvia Small.

Drums were drumming as the members wit-

Cont'd on next page



From left, Actor Tim Reid, his wife Daphne, and NABS Youth Director Elisha “Mother” Minter

Storytellers entertained and were entertained in conference by the ocean

Cont'd from previous page

nessed our Co-Founder Linda Goss lead our dynamic installation ceremony for the Passing of the Cowtail Switch to induct our new National President, Dylan Pritchett of Williamsburg, VA. Our dedicated and compassionate outgoing National President Barbara Eady passed the Cowtail switch on Friday, November 17, 2006 during our Annual Membership meeting.

Much gratitude and appreciation is extended to our volunteers, sponsors, and contributors who helped to make a difference throughout our festival and conference.

As we joined hand in hand in our Unity Circle for the close of the festival and conference on Sunday morning, I am sure many reflected upon their inspirational, motivational, educational, and rejuvenating experiences while “Walkin’ Talkin’ and Shoutin’ all the way to the Ocean” in the beautiful city of San Diego, California.

•••••



“Sarge” Collier, 83, a Buffalo Soldier, with Marine “Corps bagpipe player.



NABS honored with San Diego Proclamation: From left, Linda Brown of San Diego, Dr. Annjennette McFarlin and Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley



Country singer Miko Marks serenades gathering



African American Heritage Museum’s Jim Crow Car

Greetings from NABS Membership Committee!

Spring is often a time that reminds us of new life. We who have been newly appointed by our President Brother Dylan Pritchett look forward to manifesting the promise of new life as we begin this new journey together.

The new committee members are Sisters Martha Ruff, President of the Griots' Circle of Maryland, Beverly Fields Burnett, President of the North Carolina Black Storytellers Association, and myself Mama Edie Armstrong, former founding chair of Ase: The Chicago Association of Black Storytellers.

We have the daunting task of following in the phenomenal footsteps of Sister Barbara Eady, our Immediate Past President, who actually WAS the Membership Committee for (a long time?), and was preceded by Sister Linda Jenkins Brown, our current Executive Director, who initiated many of the most useful methods that still serve us well today. And of course, there were others who assisted in this continuing effort toward efficient and beneficial service to our membership as well. To all of them we give thanks.

Our first teleconference was held on Sunday, March 18. In addition to the current committee members listed above, participants included Brother Dylan, Sister Linda Jenkins Brown, our President-Elect Sister Vanora Legaux, and Sister Barbara Eady. We reviewed the history of this committee, some of the efforts that worked well

and those that didn't. We were also able to determine the technological capabilities we now have that should assist in our future efforts toward improvements in organization building.

Although Brother Dylan would like to see the committee remain relatively small for the time being, I am asking as the newly appointed chairman of this committee for you to give consideration to ways in which we might better serve the membership of our organization. We will also be reviewing feedback that has been previously received and will respond under the advisement of the executive committee.

Our charge at this time is to improve communications and the various procedural systems presently in place, to increase youth and adult membership, to stimulate informative, supportive, and creative exchange among our members, and to seek new ways to provide additional member benefits. My personal goals are to also broaden membership to include more of our cousins from across the African Diaspora, from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Belize, Brazil, Kenya, Ethiopia, Senegal, Peru, Mississippi, Tennessee, wherever our people live who embrace their Africanness and can authentically tell Black Stories as Black Storytellers. I would also like to encourage our connections to each other throughout the year, letting each other know of the events we're engaged in and are excited about; sending messages of con-

gratulations or encouragement, even if we think we can't attend. It goes a long way. To have an effective method of sharing sadness and special joys can also go a long way toward healing, wholeness, and the sense that someone cares. To welcome opportunities to collaborate on projects – even across the miles – will remind us that we're not alone and will increasingly enable us to tap into the rich reservoir of resources that we potentially are to each other and to our communities.

So, let's brag more about the *National Association of Black Storytellers* every time we do a show. Send the notices about our festivals out to people who have never come and may never tell a story! The overall experience will be one they will cherish forever. Let's consider creating some bumper stickers or book marks that shout out who we are. Let's develop a web site that is enticing, exciting, and full of information. Let's "represent" in our communities and request permission to sell our anthology at every book fair we participate in or find out about. Have concerts that feature various authors included in the anthology. Let's do more community service through our local affiliates – yes, even those that don't pay.

Let's have a presence across the country and around the world that brings big respect, appreciation, and great joy just because of who we are. We can

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“Our roots,...story,...dreams,...glory” in 2007

by Vanora Legaux

Sound the alarm, ring the bells, and hear the calling of the drums for the 25th Anniversary Celebration “In The Tradition...” Annual National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference, November 14-18, 2007! Feel the rumbling coming from the North, South, East and West. It’s the movement of trains, cars, buses and vans, all headed to Atlanta, Georgia for the great celebration of “OUR ROOTS, OUR STORY, OUR DREAMS, OUR GLORY”.

Atlanta, home of The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Historic Auburn Avenue; The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History; Apex Museum, Shrine of the Black Madonna bookstore, the largest African-American book store in the Southeast, and The Atlanta University Center, comprised of six colleges and universities. It is the largest African-American educational complex in the world.

This Silver Anniversary will honor our Founders Mother Mary Carter Smith and Sister Linda Goss, from the seed planted in their hearts by our Ancestors, to NABS, as we know it today, and their stories. This celebration will be memorable

beyond measure. New this year is a Master Liars’ Contest, craft demonstrations in the marketplace, NABS Documentary and new venues for greater community outreach. Plans are being made to continue to offer Continuing Education Units (CEU) for workshops. For more information visit NABSinc.org for updates and deadlines.

Our host affiliate Kuumba Storytellers of Georgia along with other committee members are working untiringly in a collaborative effort and are leaving no stone unturned to make sure there is community participation and that the 25th is the best and encompasses the vision set before us.

Get excited! Bring your family and a busload of youth.

November 14-18, 2007

The Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel

Atlanta

Make hotel reservations early.

SPREAD THE WORD

Festival Director - Vanora Franklin Legaux

Co-Festival Director - Akbar Imhotep

From 24th Festival and Conference

Below, Zora Neale Hurston Award honorees, from left, Clora Bryant, and Jeannie and the late Jimmie Cheatham (see obit announcement page 15)



Nashid Furaha-Ali fluting all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

All Vans and Buses lead toward Atlanta for the 25th NABS Festival and Convention Celebration

By Elisha “Mother” Minter
NABS Youth Director

It is hard to believe that 25 years have gone by and Mother Mary Carter Smith and Sis. Linda Goss’s vision is thriving and well. They have loved us and taught us to love the oral tradition of story telling and all the wonderful literature that is a part of what we call “black storytelling.”

The Youth division of NABS has adopted the theme “Bring a Van, Bring a Bus and Bring your Youth to Us.” Bring them to the Festival and Conference so that the legacy that Mother Mary and Sis Linda will go on forever as we instill a love for storytelling in the hearts of our youth.

Our Atlanta Affiliate, KUMBA, is working hard with the assistance of our National Youth Director, Elisha Minter, to provide programs on site and in the community that will prove to be a literary adventure and foster a love for storytelling that will last a lifetime.

We need our members to get on board (a bus or a van) and bring your youth to this wonderful 25th Anniversary celebration and also volunteer where needed to make this a special memory for our youth. We’ll see you in Atlanta.

For more information please call Sis. Elisha Minter @ 704-563-0198 or email her at motherminter52@yahoo.com.

Calling all Affiliates to send NABS Youth News to Mother Minter @ motherminter52@yahoo.com for our new youth newsletter to be coming soon.

Top Ten Reasons to Tell Stories

By MaryAnn Harris ©

1. To Share
2. To Remember
3. To Talk
4. To Persuade
5. To Listen
6. To Learn
7. To Laugh
8. To Inform
9. To Cry
10. To Earn \$\$\$\$\$\$



(Above) C. Anthony Cole Dance Troupe of San Diego.
(Below) Drummers of Tesachosan, a West African troupe



“I Feel The Rhythm” author and illustrator were special guests at 24th Festival and Conference. Above, from left, Michelle Woods, illustrator, Elisha “Mother” Minter, NABS youth director; T. Ford, BSSD artistic director; Festival director Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley; and author Toyomi Igus.

A DECADE OF COWTAIL SWITCHING!

by Dylan Pritchett
National President of NABS

Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley has recently concluded a decade of service to NABS in various capacities. Normally, members voted onto the Board of Directors serve four years and then have an option to continue another four year term with Board approval. Not only did Sparkle take on that challenge, but tacked on additional years by serving as President-Elect, National President and Past President...totaling ten years!

In addition, Sparkle carried on her motto, which we heard several times, ‘Step Up! Together we can make it happen.’ She took on many NABS projects such as Editor of the NABS newsletter as well as serving as National Festival Director for our “In The Tradition...” Festival and Conferences in Winston-Salem, NC (1999), Richmond, VA (2001) and San Diego, CA (2006)!

During Sparkle’s tenure there were many initiatives she supported. The strengthening of our financial infrastructure, building upon NABS’ communication network with the Affiliate Roundtable and liaisons, implementing CEU’s for National Conference Workshops, establishing the Preview Stage, avid promoter and supporter of Sayin’ Somethin’ and the development of the National Literacy Program to name just a few of Sparkle’s leadership accomplishments and successes.

Sparkle has taken up the Cowtail switch and ran with it; waving it proudly and boldly! The



Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley

vision of those who had previously served in the positions she held is an awesome list of Brothers and Sisters. Their work, too, paved the path on which she walked. For ten years Sparkle followed that path and smoothed it out a bit, and kept our feet moving toward the future.

Sparkle says she is a firm believer in the words of educator Benjamin E. Mays: ‘The tragedy of life doesn’t lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.’ We are grateful for Sparkle’s decade of service, dedication, sweat, and sacrifice in time, sleep and resources while helping NABS continuing to reach our goals and her leadership in keeping our foot on the path....Cowtail switching all the way!!!

“The Bundle of Sticks,” *an Aesop fable*

Adapted by David Noonan

A farmer had many sons who quarreled constantly. He tried to mediate the many disputes, offering his wise counsel to get them to stop bickering- to no avail. One day, the irritated farmer reached the end of his patience. He sum-

moned his sons to the barn where a bundle of sticks lay on the ground.

“I want each one of you to step up and try breaking the bundle in two,” he said. Each son tried but couldn’t do it. The farmer then untied the bundle and handed each son

a stick that he easily broke in two.

The wise farmer then said, “Learn from this example. As long as you remain united, there’s no enemy that can break you. But if you separate from one another, you can be ruined.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Miko Marks sings first presentation of original song “Thunder Rose”

Miko Marks, Country Singer was our guest vocalist during the 24th National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference in San Diego, CA.

Miko wrote an original song called “Thunder Rose” specifically to accompany the story. The story is about a tall tale set in the Old West about a cowgirl with more mettle than we’ve ever seen before. She wowed a crowd of approximately 500 elementary students during our youth program at Southwestern College as she played her guitar and sung her first presentation of the original song.

The story Thunder Rose was written by Jerdine Nolen. The illustrator Kadir Nelson presented his award winning illustrations while Valerie Tutson, a NABS storyteller, told the amazing story in the oral tradition.

Before leaving for a Country Music Award show, Miko took time out to rock the house with storytellers and scholars with her rendition of “Mama” and “Thunder Rose”. At the historic Avalon Theatre in Hollywood, CA, Miko won “Best New Country Artist for 2006” by New Music Weekly Magazine.

Miko also released in 2006 her first music video, “Mama”, featuring a cameo by Grammy Award winner Erykah Badu, who played the title role of “Mama”.

Jimmy Cheatham, 2006 Zora Neale Hurston honoree, passes

Jazz trombonist and professor Jimmy Cheatham, who played with Duke Ellington and Lionel

Hampton before forming his own blues band with his wife Jeannie, has died. He was 82.



Jimmy and his wife Jeannie Cheatham were honored at the 24th National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference in San Diego, CA as our 2006 Zora Neale Hurston Award honorees along with Clora Bryant.

According to new reports Cheatham died of heart failure after collapsing suddenly at his San Diego home on Jan. 12, said his widow, Jeannie. He had suffered an arrhythmia and had undergone heart surgery in December.

Jimmy Cheatham, was a former University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor in the departments of Music and Afro-American Studies.

Over his decades-long career, Cheatham also worked as an arranger and composer.

Since the mid-1980s, he had played with his wife, a vocalist and pianist, in their Kansas City-style Sweet Baby Blues Band. Their 1985 debut album, “Sweet Baby Blues,” won a

French Grand Prix du Disque award. “Luv in the Afternoon” was voted blues album of the year in a 1991 critics poll in

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Membership Committee

Cont’d from Page 3

lift each other up and empower ourselves to step out into destinies we might never have thought possible.

So, please - let us hear from you. We will give every suggestion our most earnest consideration. We ask now for the permission of our elders to continue on with our efforts and welcome your prayers as we move into our new adventure of providing service to NABS in this new capacity.

Peace and blessings.
Mama Edie, Chair
NABS Membership Committee
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National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc. Affiliates

African Folk Heritage Circle
New York, NY

ASE: The Chicago Association of Black Storytellers
Oak Park, IL

Black Storytellers Alliance
Minneapolis, MN

Black Storytelling Association of Rochester, NY
Leslie Carolyn Edwards

Black Storytelling Association of San Diego
San Diego, CA

Cleveland Association of Black Storytellers, Inc.
Cleveland, OH

Detroit Association of Black Storytellers, Inc.
Detroit, MI

Griots' Circle of Maryland
Baltimore, MD

Keepers of the Culture
Upper Darby, PA

Kuumba Storytellers of Georgia
Atlanta, GA

Featured tellers at 24th Festival and Conference



From left, Clarence Mollock, Peter Barrett, Caroliese Frink Reed, Shekinah Perkins, Oba William King, and Dr. Annjennette McFarlin

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