Plan to join us!
Friday, February 24, 2006

28th Annual Irish Evening

31st Anniversary Highlights

To open HoCoPoLitSo's 31st program year and celebrate HoCoPoLitSo's 30th Anniversary as well as honor founder Ellen Conroy Kennedy. Five Maryland Poets Laureate saluted HoCoPoLitSo with a reading and reception on Sunday, November 14, 2004, at Howard Community College. Columbia, MD. Poets Lucille Clifton, Michael Collier, Michael Glaser, Linda Pastan and Reed Whittmore read from their work and that of friend and colleague, the late Roland Flint. Each poet shared a favorite poem and a favorite Ellen story. Reed Whittmore was moved to an impromptu poem dedicated to the woman whose name is synonymous with HoCoPoLitSo.

On November 18, 2004, Board Chair, David Barrett, along with Michael Glaser, introduced the evening. A concert of traditional Irish music with musicians Dominic Murray, Linda Hickman, Tony DeMarco, Terry Winch, Jesse Winch, and Grace Griffith and stepdancers Maura Hodgetts and Caitlin Golding followed.

In cooperation with the Division of English/World Languages, Maryland Poet Laureate Michael Glaser read to Howard Community College students and others at Howard Community College in the Burrell Galleria on April 11, 2005. Mr. Glaser engaged the audience with poetry and storytelling; many of the poems appealed to the students in their descriptions of school and family life.

On Friday, May 6, 2005 Pulitzer Prize winning author Edward P. Jones read from The Known World (2004) and entertained questions from an audience of 108 at Howard Community College, Burrell Galleria. Mr. Jones was interviewed the next day by poet E. Ethelbert Miller for a new edition of The Writing Life. HoCoPoLitSo hosted Mr. Jones for the first time in 1994.

In cooperation with the Howard County Library and the Howard County Center for African American Culture, HoCoPoLitSo partnered in this year's Columbia Festival of the Arts to produce a Juneteenth (June 19th) event on the secret codes of Hidden in Plain View, Dr. Raymond Dobard, gospel singer Katie Davenport, and Executive Director of the Howard County Center of African-American Culture, Wylene Burch.

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From The Director

In a year of global hardship and recovery, HoCoPoLitSo has weathered its own challenges. In the wake of the retirement of its dear founder, Ellen Kennedy, and its transition to a new space at Howard County Community College.

The loyalty of its long-time Friends and supporters, the hard work of its Board of Directors to effect the transition and form new community partnerships, and its own excitements in the Men’s Room and the Community Room—this year’s events were Virginia Pauich, retired head, Howard High School English department, Timothy Singleton of the Baltimore Sun, and Sara Scara, retired Howard County high school guidance counselor.

In addition, twenty-two students were chosen by the English departments to receive HoCoPoLitSo’s “Promise and Achievement Awards.” The honors were: Kelsey Elder, Jimmy McQuilkin (Atholton), Heather Chalfin, Joseph McCord (Centennial), Buffy McCord (River Hill), Brittany McQuilkin (River Hill), and Kelsey Murphy, who achieved the highest average among the student-athletes. Other awards were given to students in all grades, from the 7th and 8th grade by illustrating that there is just as much fear in being a parent of a student as there is in being a student. Author of several collections of poetry. Being a Father, A Lover’s Eye, and In the Men’s Room and Other Poems, he has edited two anthologies of Maryland poets, The Cooke Book and 1976: The Maryland Millennial Anthology.

On Tuesday, April 12, students from Cradlerock School, Elkridge Landing Middle and Patuxent Valley Middle were bused to the Jim Rouse Theatre at Wilde Lake High School to celebrate William Shakespeare’s birthday with “Bill’s Buddies,” and other festivities. Wilde Lake High School students selected high school students participated in an interactive workshop.

For twenty-four years HoCoPoLitSo has awarded prizes to the winners of its All-County Writing Competition and honored students nominated by their teachers for Promise and Achievement in Language Arts. HoCoPoLitSo holds poetry book prizes with hand-inscribed bookplates in the hope of fostering lifelong reading habits and a love of literature. The tradition continued this year as HoCoPoLitSo board members made presentations at eleven high school assembly programs.

The six creative writing winners were Renee Davidson (Howard) (first and second place), and Chante R. Sessoms (Centennial) in the personal essay category; Erica Szalkowski (Hammond), Sarah Brodhan (Hammond), and Renee Davidson (Howard) in the poetry category; and in the short story category, Leah Katte (Reservoir) and Rebecca Matthews (Howard) (second and third place).

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Edward J Jones

I’m grateful for all the new friends made this year. I thank the board of directors and you, a Friend of HoCoPoLitSo, for helping to make Howard County a singular and enriching place for those who create and appreciate literature.

Tara Hart, Managing Director

Student Audiences

Between November 2004 and April 2005, more than 820 students from Howard County’s eleven public high schools had the opportunity to hear and discuss the merits of poetry with Maryland Poet Laureate Michael Glaser. He captured the attention of students and teachers alike when he read poems based on memories he had of the 7th and 8th grade by illustrating that there is just as much fear in being a parent of a student as there is in being a student. Author of several collections of poetry.

Patricia’s Awards

Patricia’s regional, state, and national prizes include the first place in the national Final Four TÉLÉCITÉ Award by Walter A. Kevles from the Smithsonian.

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