



Cornel West to Speak at Stockton's 10th Annual Fannie Lou Hamer Civil Rights Symposium

Noted Activist, Author, Commentator at Oct. 3 Event

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

Contact: Maryjane Briant
News and Media Relations Director
Galloway Township, NJ 08205
Maryjane.Briant@stockton.edu
(609) 652-4593

Galloway, NJ – Dr. Cornel West, philosopher, scholar, activist and pre-eminent public intellectual, will be the keynote speaker at the 10th Annual Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposium on **Thursday, Oct. 3** at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Dr. West frequently appears as a commentator on networks including CNN, MSNBC and PBS and programs such as Real Time With Bill Maher and The Colbert Report. He made his film debut in The Matrix and has appeared in over 25 documentaries and films. He can be heard weekly on his national public radio show with Tavis Smiley, "Smiley & West."

He has written 19 books and edited 13 others. He is best known for his classic, Race Matters, Democracy Matters, and his 2009 memoir, Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud.

Dr. West is professor of Philosophy and Christian Practice at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and has taught at Princeton, Harvard and Yale.

Public demand for tickets has been so great that the 2:30 p.m. event in the Performing Arts Center on Stockton's main campus is sold out. The program, sponsored by the college's Africana Studies Program and the Unified Black Students Society, also includes a panel discussion.

-more-

-Continued from Page 1-

“This year’s program, “Voice of Courage: The Enduring Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement,” continues our tradition of bringing informative educational programs to the college and the wider community, which speaks to the life and legacy of Mrs. Hamer,” said Dr. Patricia Reid-Merritt, Distinguished Professor of Social Work and Africana Studies.

Hamer was a civil rights activist who helped organize the Mississippi Freedom Summer voter registration drive for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1964. She also helped found the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to oppose her state’s all-white delegation at the 1964 Democratic Convention in Atlantic City. Mrs. Hamer, who died in 1977, brought Mississippi’s civil rights struggle to the national stage during a televised speech at the convention.

Her speech galvanized millions of viewers, who heard how African-Americans were being denied the right to vote in various states through intimidation and illegal tests and poll taxes. As a result, two MFDP delegates were given the right to speak at the convention and the other members were seated as guests.

“Fannie Lou Hamer remains an inspirational role model for me” said Dr. Reid-Merritt. “These annual tributes to her legacy continue to educate a new generation and, hopefully, will encourage young people to work for social change and social justice.”

“Dr. West is not just a brilliant scholar and social activist,” Dr. Reid-Merritt continued. “He is an informed, passionate and courageous speaker as well.”

Panelists will include Dr. Gwendolyn Long Harris, executive director of the Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs at Rutgers University, and former Commissioner of Human Services, State of New Jersey; James Harris, president, New Jersey NAACP; Dr. Michelle McDonald, associate professor of History at Stockton. Dr. Reid-Merritt will be the moderator.

There will be a reception immediately following the program.

The event is co-sponsored by Stockton’s Office of the Provost, School of General Studies, Office of Student Development, Office of Affirmative Action and Ethics, Council of Black Faculty and Staff and the Social Work Program.

#