



Photography Exhibit “Claiming Citizenship” at Richard Stockton College, Jan. 11 – Feb. 28

Event Illustrates African Americans Taking Advantage of the New
Opportunities Created by the New Deal in the 1930s

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Contact: Tim Kelly
Office of Public Relations
Galloway Township, NJ 08205
Tim.Kelly@stockton.edu
(609) 652-4950

Galloway Township, NJ – The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey will host an inspiring photography exhibit, *Claiming Citizenship: African Americans and New Deal Photography*, to take place January 11 – Feb. 28, on the First Floor of the College Library (E-Wing of the main campus) in Galloway.

The exhibit, made possible by grants from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts through the Local Arts Grant administered by the Atlantic County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, is free and open to the public.

The exhibit portrays African Americans claiming economic, cultural and recreational opportunities created by the New Deal. Additional display cases highlight how other minorities experienced American life in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

“This exhibit is timely in several respects,” said Dr. Sharon Ann Musher, Assistant Professor of U.S. History, who coordinated the exhibit. “First, in the midst of the current economic downturn, when Obama has had so little success implementing a federal jobs program, it’s important to reexamine the range of jobs the New Deal created and to see how they jump-started the economy and preserved the skills and the morale of the unemployed.

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“Additionally, it is timely to reassess black civic engagement and opportunities roughly 50 years after the start of the Civil Rights Movement and as we approach the national Martin Luther King holiday and Black History Month.” “These photos,” she continued, “depict how despite ongoing discrimination and inequality, African Americans took advantage of government programs and policies to work, learn, take care of their families, receive health care and vote.”

Musher was contacted by the traveling exhibit’s curator, Rickie Solinger, after hearing of her own research on New Deal photography for her forthcoming book, *A New Deal for Art*, which is to be published by the University of Chicago Press.

Musher added that the “local” component of the exhibit included work with six of her former students (five Historical Studies graduates and a current student in the Instructional Technology program) to depict the 1930s experiences of (in addition to African Americans), Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and women – and how they claimed their citizenship at the time.

The students include Nicole Pietrowicz, Dorothy Luyster, Cristen Pizzimenti, Ericka Pitman, Brett Plantas and Tessa Messorre.

A website on the project shows some of the images to be displayed and additional information. Please visit <http://sites.google.com/site/claimingcitizenship/>

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