

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

45 Years Young 2010 Annual Report



Charles H. Wright

MUSEUM of AFRICAN
AMERICAN HISTORY

Rejoice • Relive • Reconnect



Table of Contents

- LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON & PRESIDENT 1 – 2
- FISCAL YEAR 2010 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 3
- STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES..... 4
- MUSEUM DONORS..... 5 – 8
- BOARD OF TRUSTEES 9
- MUSEUM CHIEF OFFICERS..... 9
- HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR: EXHIBITIONS 10 – 13
- HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR: EVENTS 14 – 19
- INSIDE COVER PHOTOS & CREDITS..... 20

Letter from the Chairperson & President

Dear Friends:

This year marks the 45th year of existence for the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, and we're pleased to report that the institution, the world's largest of its kind, is more robust than ever. Highlights from the past year include:

- Partnering with over 90 organizations, including the Detroit International Jazz Festival, Arab American National Museum, and Wayne State University, to present a diverse array of programming
- Offering over 150 educational and public programs
- Presentation of the Smithsonian's *Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment* and the National Conference of Artist's *Art of the Masters: A Survey of African American Images, 1980 - 2000* traveling exhibitions
- Organization of the *Crowning Glories: Status, Style and Self-Expression* exhibition as well as 5 contemporary artist exhibits
- A complete redesign of the museum's website and expansion into the social media realm, including a Facebook fan page which has grown to over 10,000 fans in less than 12 months
- National media attention from NPR, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and BET.com
- Hosting performances by national and international artists such as Third World, Nikki Giovanni, Daniel Beaty, K'Jon, Kindred the Family Soul, and Sarah Jones
- Esteemed visitors, including former President Chissano of Mozambique, actor/writer/director/producer Glynn Turman, musical artist and entrepreneur Usher, and most importantly, each and every one of our members and supporters from the general public.

Additionally, we were proud to be chosen as the location for one of Mayor Dave Bing's Detroit Works Project town hall meetings, and for the Living Cities Foundation, a consortium of 21 of the world's largest foundations and financial institutions, to announce 17 million dollars in investment being made available to Midtown Detroit. Events such as these underscore the importance of this museum not just as a major cultural institution, but also a center of community in this great city.

In these challenging times, we continue to make the adjustments necessary to be economically sustainable. However, the museum cannot be judged by a balance sheet alone. We must be "in the black" and have an impact - these two are not mutually exclusive, and indeed must be mutually intertwined: to create the sustainability necessary we must engage and inform on an exponential level. Our mission to educate is sacred; there is no question about that. However, everything else must be open to discussion. Our service to the community is at the core of what we do. We'll continue to look for new and innovative ways to partner with others to expand our collective reach and further our aim of celebrating African American history and culture.

Letter from the Chairperson & President

The "great recession" has confronted us all with the need to reset, at the organizational, city, state and national levels. History confirms that we are innovators, and we must draw from that strength, now more than ever. We need everyone at the table bringing all that they have - money, time, talents and strategic thinking. Every generation must come with their best, and with that, we'll not just get by, we will succeed and prosper.

This is the mindset that will help us not only face but overcome the present adversity, just as our ancestors and elders did with prior, seemingly insurmountable challenges. We can draw strength from that history that is all of ours, and recognize the amazing resiliency that has allowed African Americans to overcome slavery, racism and disenfranchisement and reach the corridors of power and the highest office in the land. The toughness that is needed now is the grit that is woven into the fabric of this great city, of this country, and in African American culture. And it is not just this institution or the African American community that needs it - it is all of us, this entire nation.

It is in these times that the voices of history in this museum can help each of us find that strength and resiliency to overcome our present circumstances. The stories that come out of here, as well as enter with each of our visitors, are the keys to unlocking our inherent greatness. More than ever, we need to look in that mirror of self-reflection and know, at the deepest levels of our being and as a core of confidence, that "we still got it."

Thank you for your continued support and dedication.

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth W. ("Betty") Brooks
Chair, Board of Trustees

Juanita Moore,
President & CEO

Fiscal Year 2010 Financial Highlights

The economic downturn affecting the entire nation continues to impact the Museum. Anticipating a reduction in revenue, the Museum took aggressive steps to reduce expenses. For the fiscal year, revenue declined nearly \$500,000 and total expenses, excluding depreciation, were reduced \$686,000. Despite these reductions, we were able to provide the high quality and impactful exhibitions and programs highlighted in other sections of this report.

A summary of financial activity for the year includes the following:

Operating support from the City of Detroit was reduced \$130,000 and programmatic support from the State of Michigan was reduced \$31,000 from the prior fiscal year.

Earned revenue (admissions, museum store sales, and facility rentals) decreased \$111,000 from last year and membership revenue decreased \$53,000.

The Museum invested approximately \$200,000 in building improvements to repair and upgrade the Farnsworth bridge entrance to the Museum. These capital funds were provided by the City of Detroit.

In October, 2009 the Museum was awarded a \$603,000 three-year grant from the U. S. Department of Education to partner with Eastern Michigan University in developing a series of products related to the Underground Railroad. This year, the Museum received nearly \$70,000 from the grant, with the balance to be received and expended over the next two years.

Cash and investments increased approximately \$145,000 or 6.3% over the prior year. Cash restricted for various projects was expended either for programming or capital improvements in accordance with grant obligations. Museum liabilities increased \$95,000 (23.3 percent) from last year.

The Museum's endowment fund increased 7.4 percent from last year to a total of approximately \$830,000. An additional \$2.1 million is held in trust for the Museum by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, for a total of approximately \$2.9 million. Contributions to the fund, along with improved financial market performance during the year resulted in an increase of 10.5 percent in value from last year.

All funds combined, revenue for the year exceeded expenses before depreciation by \$247,700.

Statements of Activities (All Funds Combined)

For the Years Ended June 30, 2008, 2009 and 2010 (in thousands of dollars)

	2008	2009	2010
Revenues:	\$6,415.1	\$6,155.1	\$5,659.2
Expenses:	\$ 6,476.8	\$6,098.0	\$5,411.5
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) before depreciation	\$(61.7)	\$57.1	\$247.7
Depreciation	\$1,618.4	\$1,376.9	\$1,105.6
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) in Net Assets	\$(1,680.1)	\$(1,319.8)	\$857.9
NET ASSETS - Beginning	\$7,317.2	\$5,637.1	\$4,317.3
NET ASSETS - Ending	\$5,637.1	\$4,317.3	\$3,459.4

Museum Donors July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010

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Museum Donors July 1 to November 20, 2010

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Ford Motor Company Fund

Dakatari Soul (\$50,000.00 +)
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
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Highlights from the Past Year: Exhibitions

JOE LOUIS: HOMETOWN HERO
August 6, 2009 - September 15, 2010

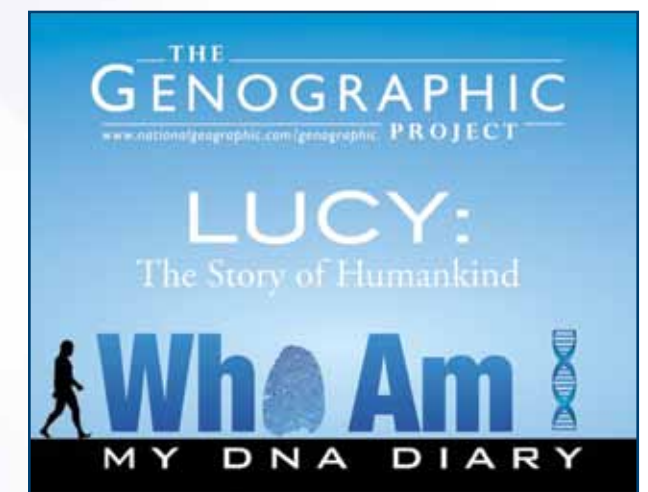


This comprehensive exhibition on the life of an iconic Detroit native was a must for sports fans everywhere. Born the son of an Alabama cotton picker, Joe Louis, known to many as the African American heavyweight champion named the "Brown Bomber," became a national hero and symbol of American democracy versus Nazi intolerance. *Joe Louis: Hometown Hero* presented the museum viewer with an extraordinary view of Joe Louis and his rise to iconic status in two parallel timelines: the Joe Louis Story and the American Story. Visitors followed the life of Joe Louis and contemporaneously viewed his life within

the context of many of the most important events in American history during the post Civil War Reconstruction Period and the 20th century: the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Plessy vs. Ferguson establishing "separate but equal" as a legal basis for enforcing the separation of the races, World War I, the Great Migration and Depression, World War II, the U. S. Supreme Court's reversal of Plessy in Brown vs. the Board of Education and the continuing struggle of African Americans for true equality and the end of racism.

WHO AM I? MY DNA DIARY
November 15, 2009 - September 30, 2010

Who Am I? My DNA Diary was an exhibition of National Geographic and IBM's Genographic Project in tandem with *Lucy: The Story of Human Origins* from the International Museum Institute of New York. This double feature challenged preexisting notions of race and ethnicity by showing that the more we understand "the collective journey of humankind, the more likely we are to see each other as members of the same extended family." Visitors were encouraged to participate in this project by purchasing their own participation kit from the museum store and submitting their personal DNA sample for analysis. Sales of the kits helped fund research and support a Legacy Fund for indigenous and traditional peoples' community-led language revitalization and cultural projects.



Highlights from the Past Year: Exhibitions

THE ELEPHANT PROJECT

October 20 - 31, 2010

African Artist Andries Botha presented Nomkhubulwane, a 9-foot tall, 1-ton South African elephant sculpture made from recycled motor truck tires which traveled across the Atlantic. Says Botha, "It is made in collaboration with the Magqubo Ntombela foundation and the wilderness movement... This elephant serves as a creative symbolic reference that calls people to new imaginative conversations with our ailing co-existence with other living things." Nomkhubulwane was located outside of the museum at the Warren entrance and served as the focal point for several programs including *Storytime with Nomkhubulwane the Elephant*, a recycled jewelry workshop and the *A Night to Dream About Harvest Fest*. This was a project of the Human Elephant Foundation presented in partnership with Marygrove College and Detroit Cultural Center partners.



AIN'T NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING: HOW THE APOLLO THEATER SHAPED AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT

October 1, 2010 - January 2, 2011

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of Harlem's Apollo Theater the Smithsonian presents *Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment*, which begins its national tour at the Charles H. Wright Museum. Drawing on wide-ranging materials, including historic photographs, film, recordings, and artist interviews, this multimedia exhibit includes one-of-a-kind and rarely displayed artifacts from artists such as James Brown, Michael Jackson, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, LL Cool J and many more.



Apollo Theater Exterior, 2008

Photo courtesy of the Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc. Photo by Shahar Azran

Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment was organized by the National Museum of African American History and Culture in collaboration with the Apollo Theater Foundation. The exhibition's national tour is made possible by a generous grant from Time Warner Inc. Additional funding was provided by JPMorgan Chase & Co. The exhibition's national tour is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). Local sponsors include DTE Energy, Masco Corporation, Ford Motor Company, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Erb Family Foundation.

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

CROWNING GLORIES: STATUS, STYLE, AND SELF-EXPRESSION

January 18, 2010 - January 17, 2011

Organized by the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, *Crowning Glories* is a tribute to the beauty, style, and self-expression of black women, and a historical survey of their hat-wearing traditions from the late 1700s to the present. The exhibit features vintage drawings, photographs, and a variety of exciting hats loaned from the collections of local hat queens, including the renowned Martha Jean "The Queen" Steinberg. Also presented are hats created by locally and nationally recognized hat designers, such as Mr. Song, designer of the internationally renowned "Aretha Franklin" hat. From enslaved African American women, whose head coverings often doubled as protection from the elements during the week and subtle fashion statements on Sundays, to the extraordinary hats worn by Queen Mothers in the Red Hat Society, to the elaborate headwear that has evolved into symbols of high social status, viewers gain insight into the culture surrounding the hat wearing traditions among black women.



Photo: Gosden, GVPSTUDIO2

ART OF THE MASTERS: A SURVEY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN IMAGES, 1980 - 2000

September 24, 2010 - February 28, 2011

Organized by The Michigan Chapter of the National Conference of Artists, *Art of the Masters: A Survey of African American Images* is presented in accordance with the mission and traditions of the NCA — to introduce the works of African American "Master" artists to the world. Included



are works of art created by those who made significant contributions to the discipline from 1980-2000. While the exhibition covers a twenty-year period, many of the artists enjoyed long careers that spanned from the 1930s, during the black cultural renaissance period, into the final two decades of the twentieth century. Featured, for example, are extraordinary images by black renaissance artists Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden, as well as stunning works by artists that immediately followed in their footsteps such as John Biggers and Elizabeth Catlett. Spectacular creations by Detroit area artists Alvin Loving, Jon Onye Lockard, Shirley Woodson, Raymond Wells, Aaron Ibn Pori-Pitts, Marian Stephens, and Hugh Grannum, ensures that art enthusiasts, collectors, and art professionals will experience an array of work created by artists of African heritage.

Raymond Wells, *Sophisticated Lady*

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

THE TEST: TUSKEGEE AIRMEN PROJECT November 18, 2010 - June 19, 2011

The Test tells an incredible story of men in war struggling to be the best Americans they can be as they struggle against the prejudices of their countrymen. This exhibit details the first African American aviators in the U.S. Military in combat in World War II, who were part of an effort by the War Department to determine if African-Americans had the capabilities to be effective combat aviators. Incorporating information on racial relations in America before World War II and African-American involvement in early aviation, *The Test* includes photographs, models, maps, graphics and the stories of the men, the aircraft they flew and flew against, and the operations in which they participated. Finally, *The Test* pays tribute to all that served in the 99TH FS and the 332nd FG. Moreover, a section of the exhibition is dedicated to the veterans of those units who live in the host communities, such as the Detroit chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen.



AND STILL WE RISE: OUR JOURNEY THROUGH AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

This 22-gallery, ongoing exhibition serves as the central experience of our Museum, and continues to enthrall visitors young and old. The journey begins in prehistoric Africa. Cross the Atlantic Ocean, experience the tragedy of the Middle Passage, and encounter those who resisted the horrors of bondage, emancipated themselves, and sometimes took flight by way of the Underground Railroad. Throughout the journey, the efforts of men and women who built families, businesses, educational institutions, spiritual traditions, civic organizations and a legacy of freedom and justice are hailed.



Highlights from the Past Year: Events

- 37th Annual Noel Night - December 2009
- Vicki Winans in Concert - December 2009
- 2009 Kwanzaa Celebration - December 2009
- **Crowning Glories Exclusive Member Preview - January 2010**

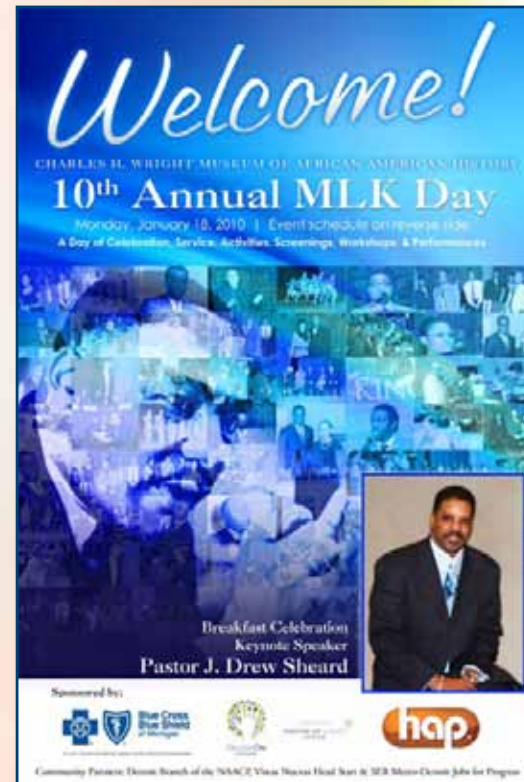
*Held the night before the exhibit's opening to the public, this exclusive members-only preview of **Crowning Glories: Status, Style and Self-Expression** brought out enough of museum members' fabulous fashions to match the fantastic headware featured within.*



Highlights from the Past Year: Events

- Hustle for History - ongoing
- **10th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - January 2010**

This busiest of days for the museum featured a rousing breakfast celebration with Pastor J. Drew Sheard of Greater Emmanuel Institutional COGIC, This Little Light of Mine and Music of the Movement Children's Workshops, film screenings of "Our Friend Martin," "Soundtrack For a Revolution" and "Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony," and theatrical productions of "Ella Baker: If You Don't Want To Know, Don't Ask" and "The Meeting."



Highlights from the Past Year: Events

- "I Remember So I Believe" - an Evening of Storytelling - February 2010
- Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Testing - February 2010
- Roots, Rhythm & Salsa - February & June 2010
- What Would Martin Say? Book Signing - February 2010
- Afro Jazz Extravaganza - February 2010
- Support Our Museum Radiothon - February 2010
- Emergency, a performance by Daniel Beaty - February 2010
- **30 Days to Lose It! - March 2010, ongoing**

What began as a month-long drive to raise awareness of and actively confront health issues facing African American women has blossomed into a year-long health & fitness program for all women, regardless of age or race, featuring monthly health screenings and topical seminars, and weekly workouts in a safe, supportive environment to "get one's sweat on!"



Highlights from the Past Year: Events

- My Times in Black and White - March 2010
- Second Saturdays' Childrens' Music Workshops - March – June 2010
- An Evening with Sarah Jones - March 2010
- A Tribute to Erma Henderson and Rosa Parks - March 2010
- **Black Women Rock! A Tribute to Betty Davis - March 2010**

Created and hosted by poet Jessica Care Moore, this exciting concert of fiercely independent female artists who defy rock and roll stereotypes featured women such as Tamar Kali, Imani Uzuri, and Steffanie Chris'tian, who've spent their careers fighting biases and breaking down barriers of image, politics and sexuality in the music industry. This standing-room only event was partnered with an inspirational master class for aspiring musicians.



Photos courtesy of Thomas Richardson

Highlights from the Past Year: Events

- Passing (theatrical production) - March & October 2010
- How are YOU standing up today? Poetry Contest - April 2010
- Bernice Johnson Reagon & Toshi Reagon in Dialogue & in Concert - April 2010
- "All in the Hattitude!" - A Gala of Inspiring Red Hatters - April 2010
- Arrival of the Lotus ~ A Celebration of Poetry and Tribute to Naomi Long Madgett - May 2010
- Charles H. Wright Vision Awards Dinner - May 2010
- **2010 Ford Freedom Awards - May 2010**



In keeping with this year's theme of celebrating African American Accomplishments in Entrepreneurship, the late John H. Johnson, founder and publisher of Ebony and Jet magazines, was honored. Usher Raymond IV, the entertainer known as "Usher," was named the Ford Freedom Award Scholar for his charity work with the New Look Foundation. The accompanying student essay contest garnered over 1,000 entries from across the region, and Usher delivered his Scholar's Lecture to 1,600 students before adding Mr. Johnson's name to the Ring of Genealogy in the Ford Freedom Rotunda. The evening gala was, once again, an event not to be missed.



Highlights from the Past Year: Events

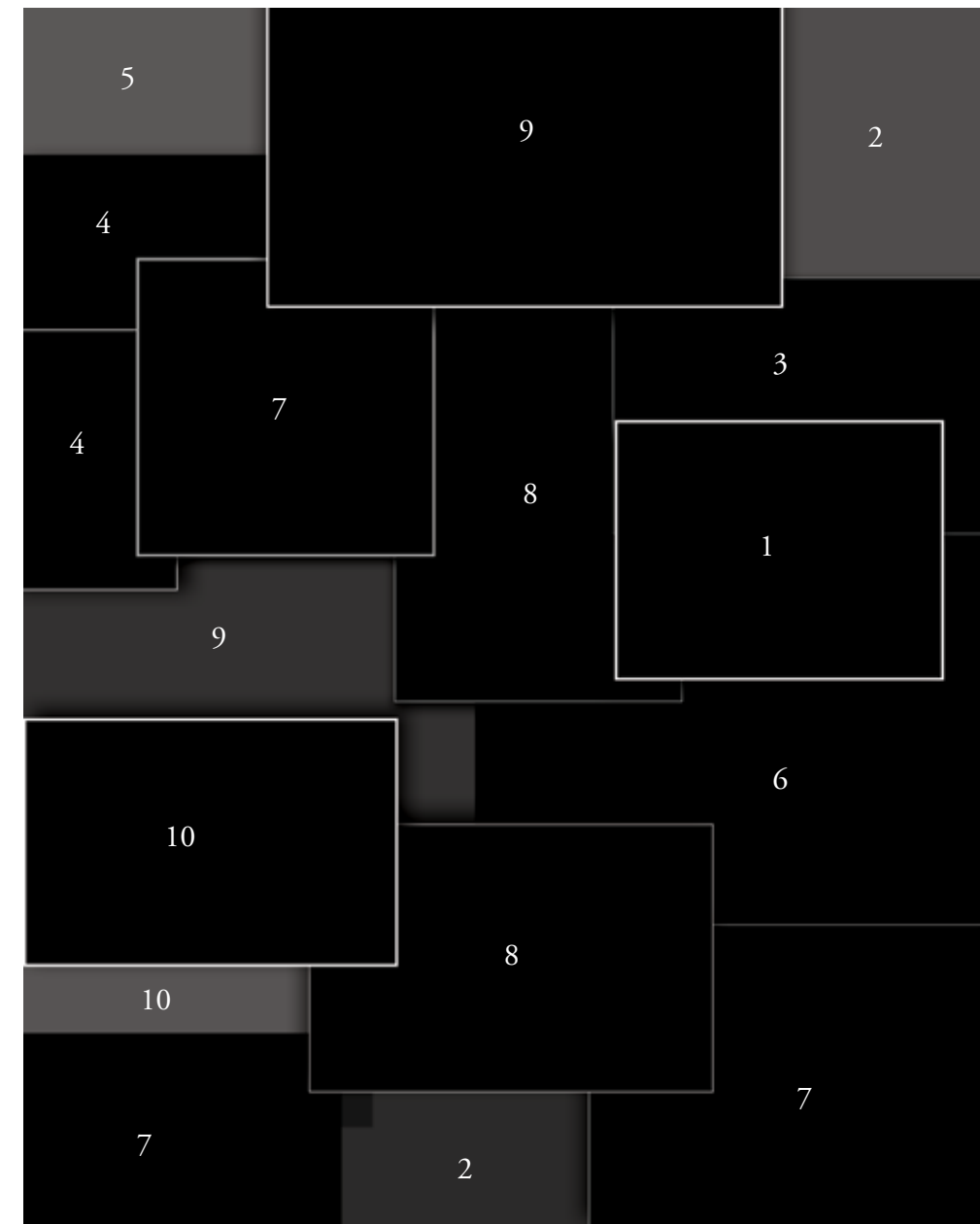
- “Embracing Our Mothers” Mother’s Day Brunch - May 2010
- AfroFlow Concert - May 2010
- Joe Louis in Paradise Valley (theatrical production) - June 2010
- 145th Juneteenth Celebration - June 2010
- 19th Annual Brown Bomber Jacket Award Ceremony - June 2010
- Black & White Party - June 2010
- Music from the Apollo Concert - June 2010
- Glitz, Glam and Gavels - June 2010
- 2010 Rhythm, Roots & Rhyme Poetry Slam - August 2010
- **28th Annual African World Festival - August 2010**

This three-day festival at Hart Plaza on Detroit’s beautiful waterfront is the museum’s largest single annual event, drawing several hundred thousand visitors to explore the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures of African and African American culture and music. 2010 musical headliners included legendary reggae ambassadors Third World, native son K’Jon and “The Great Lady of Soul,” Bettye Lavette. The children’s Watoto Village, the Health is Wealth Pavilion, Generation Next Kingdom, and the Artists’ & Elder’s Villages provided activities and excitement for the entire, extended family!



- The Legacies Project - August & September 2010
- Grandparent’s Day - September 2010
- It’s All Good Hair! - September 2010
- 7th Biennial Awards for Excellence Legacy Dinner - September 2010
- Shades of War (theatrical production) - October 2010
- Crowning Glory Hat Boutique - October 2010
- Darwin’s Legacy: Scientific Breakthrough or Breakdown? - October 2010
- Jewelry Makeover: Everything Old is New Again! - October 2010
- “A Night to Dream About” Harvest Fest - October 2010
- Music from the Apollo Theater (listening sessions) - November 2010
- Stories and Music from the Apollo Theater (workshops) - November 2010

Inside Cover Photos



1. Exclusive Member Preview to *Crowning Glories: Status, Style and Self-Expression* - January 17, 2010
2. 10th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - January 18, 2010
3. Support Our Museum Radiothon - February 20, 2010
4. Ford Freedom Awards - May 6, 2010
5. AfroFlow Concert - May 27, 2010
6. 145th Juneteenth Celebration - June 19, 2010
7. Black & White Party - June 25, 2010
8. 28th Annual African World Festival - August 20 - 22, 2010
9. Opening Reception for *Ain’t Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment* - October 1, 2010
10. “A Night to Dream About” Harvest Fest - October 31, 2010

Photos courtesy of Annistique Photography - www.annistiquephotography.com

Front cover photo of the April 12, 1997 Ribbon Cutting and Dedication of the Museum of African American History
Copyright Glen Calvin Moon



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Charles H. Wright

MUSEUM *of* AFRICAN
AMERICAN HISTORY

Rejoice • Relive • Reconnect