

CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY  
MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

## Letter from the President

July 2010

As I travel throughout the country and meet people, I'm frequently asked, "What does the Museum do and why is it important?"

Now, I could sit them down for an hour or more and tell them about the rich history of its beginnings and Dr. Charles Wright's singular dedication to getting such an institution up and running in arguably the one city in the United States that epitomizes the entirety of the African American experience. Or I could discuss at great length the continuous stream of fantastic exhibits the Museum has presented over the past couple of years. However, in most situations I only have about five minutes before something or someone else captures the questioner's attention, so I must speak swiftly and succinctly.

So, I tell them that the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History educates, demonstrates and illuminates.

### EDUCATES

I point out that our programs are developed and designed to give every visitor, from children to elders, a learning experience that will affect the way he or she looks at African American history; the way they participate in everyday life, and the way they prepare themselves for the future.

### DEMONSTRATES

Our exhibits and our wonderful guides who present them are there to bring history to life; to give motion and emotion to the

viewing of the past, and elicit an immediate response from those that visit.

### ILLUMINATES

And, finally, our magnificent building, topped by a grand, translucent dome, sheds an abundance of light on the rich histories contained within. Its openness invites all to enter and learn. Its elegantly curved Rotunda, which contains an ever-increasing list of names of great African American history makers, is a subtle but notable reminder of the circle of life and the idea of a nation continually striving without end.

### THE PROOF

Even though my short talk only takes about five minutes, it conveys volumes about the institution we hold so dear. So, the next time you are asked, "What does the Museum do and why is it important?" Remember, the Museum educates, demonstrates and illuminates.

For proof, you have to look no farther than a letter we recently received. It reads:

*"About midway through the moving And Still We Rise exhibit, I asked the engaging guide when I should bring my boys, ages five and seven. He looked me in the eye and poignantly said, "Yesterday." Ninety minutes after completing the tour, I finished crying, but the moving experience remains with me three days later. The Charles H. Wright Museum*

*of African American History was an EXTRAORDINARY experience. From the striking beauty of the Rotunda, to the wonderful greeting from Sylvia, to the dynamic and passionate narratives from the two guides in the FLAWLESS exhibits, to the heartfelt "thank you for coming" by your staff, I couldn't help but feel like I was brought into something extremely important.*

*I can't begin to imagine the work that goes into creating such a moving encounter or into putting such an amazing team... [together to create] an incredible experience... Please know that it is highly obvious through every inch of your museum. Thank you for being so welcoming and encouraging. Keep up the incredible work... Thank you."*

On second thought, maybe I shouldn't answer the question when I'm asked. Maybe I should just show them the letter.

Juanita Moore,  
President/CEO



28<sup>th</sup> Annual

# AFRICAN World Festival

DETROIT, MI | AUGUST 20-22

# RECENT EVENTS

Photos courtesy of Annistique Photography



The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the world's largest institution of its kind, presents the 2010 African World Festival August 20 - 22 on Detroit's beautiful riverfront.

In its 28th year, African World Festival is international in scope, with a hometown hospitality that could only happen in the melting pot known as Motown. Be among the 350,000 souls in the sun-drenched sea of humanity exploring the *sights, sounds, smells, and textures* of African and African American culture and music.

Enjoy the high energy, beauty and vibrancy of the International Caribbean Parade - bring your costume and join the party! Indulge in mouth-watering foods from across the Diaspora. Examine the wares of over 200 master craftsmen and visual artists. Groove to global music spanning the spectrum of roots, rock, reggae, R&B,



world, blues, jazz, hip-hop and soul. Past performers include **Angelique Kidjo, King Sunny Ade, Charlie Wilson, Roberta Flack, War and The O'Jays**. Witness the improvisatory choreography of the step competition, dance troupes and drum ensembles.

This family-friendly, weekend home-away-from-home will include something for all ages - the children's Watoto Village, the Health is Wealth Pavilion, Generation Next Kingdom, and the Artists' & Elder's Villages. The three-day, **free** event is one of the region's most anticipated summertime rituals!

Release your spirit and senses at the **28th Annual African World Festival!** For more information, please call (313) 494-5844 or visit [www.awfdetroit.com](http://www.awfdetroit.com).

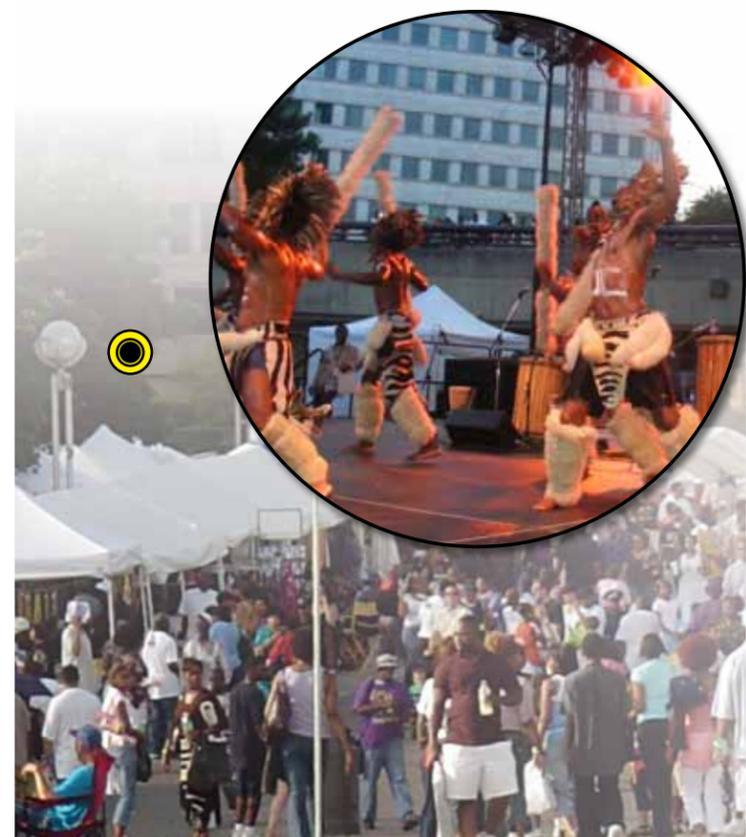


### African World Festival Contest Questionnaire

All who reply with at least 3 of the 5 questions answered correctly will receive one free 2010 AWF t-shirt. Reply by email to [awf@chwmuseum.com](mailto:awf@chwmuseum.com) or call 313-494-5824. T-shirts will be available for pick-up at the festival or from the museum information desk (August 24 - September 30).

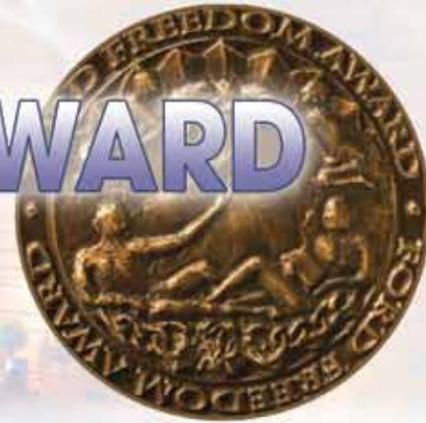
- 1) "Watoto Village" is the special Festival area for \_\_\_\_\_ activities.
- 2) Saturday will again feature the "International \_\_\_\_\_ Festival Parade".
- 3) It takes 400 \_\_\_\_\_ to sell beverages, assist performers, distribute programs, etc.
- 4) What famous afro-wearing drummer mixed a 3-hour DJ set in the 2009 AWF Underground Cafe? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) Which beloved Detroit vocalist was married on the 2008 African World Stage? \_\_\_\_\_.

*There's still time to participate! To volunteer or be a vendor, please call 313-494-5824.*



# FORD FREEDOM AWARD

## MAY 6, 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 for his highly recognized business acumen and pioneering spirit. Usher Raymond IV, the entertainer known as "Usher," was named the Ford Freedom Award Scholar for the impact his charity, the New Look Foundation, has had on today's youth. 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 Museum's Ford Freedom Rotunda. The evening gala was, once again, an event not to be missed.



Photos courtesy of Annistique Photography



## Museum Unveils New Look Website & Electronic Outreach

In the continuing effort to improve communications with you, the members, and the growing online community, a new website was unveiled this month.

Created in-house, the new website coincides with a redesigned email marketing format and robust social media presence. Website highlights include an improved visual layout; two sets of navigational tools and a site-wide search box; exhibition, event and news items are now on the homepage; an integrated social network; and admission and contact information that's always present no matter where one is on the site.



Additionally, look for Museum email messages to have a similar design as the new website. A full calendar will go out at the beginning of each month, with a weekly message to follow each Monday highlighting that week's events. You can sign up right on the homepage if you're not already receiving these important messages.

## Interesting Gifts Galore at the Museum Store!

Explore the African continent. Walk with Civil Rights leaders. Get to know W. E. B. Du Bois, Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglass, and play with Duke Ellington. Experience all of this and more by visiting the Museum's store. You are certain to find the perfect keepsake, gift or addition to your home collection.

You will also be pleased with the variety of beautiful handcrafted items available from African and local artisans.

"Shopaholic that I am, I absolutely appreciate the fact that we carry authentic items from Africa," says Keysha Bell, Sales & Retail Manager. The Museum store offers merchandise for all price points and even helps customers track down hard-to-find items. Says Ms. Bell, "Being a major resource for African and African American cultural items, we get requests for pieces that we may not even have in the store, but we're more than happy to help find them."

Enthralling books, videos and games that explore the diverse history and culture of African Americans are also available. The children's area offers historical and educational books, toys, games, dolls and puzzles, as well as resources for teachers.

Museum members receive a 10 percent discount off all regularly priced merchandise, and Museum admission is not required to enter the store, which is conveniently located between both Museum entrances.



Finally, the Museum's social media efforts over the past six months have attracted national attention, including that of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, in regards to its burgeoning Facebook fan page, which recently surpassed 7,000 fans. The Museum's page on the world's largest social network features event updates, Black History facts and conversations around the Museum's work. If you're on Facebook, "fan up" and be a part of the action! Twitter is also utilized in tandem with Facebook to promote the Museum's efforts.

Users who encounter issues when on the new site are encouraged to provide feedback online or via email as a part of the rollout process.

These tools are extremely important for reaching new audiences and improving communications in an ever more connected world. Ultimately, the aim is to raise the level of the Museum's online presence to match its stature as a leading historical institution. We are confident the new website will accomplish that – please visit [www.chwmuseum.org](http://www.chwmuseum.org) and experience it yourself!

# 25% off

Please note that all sale prices are final and this discount cannot be combined with any other offer and is not valid on select items. The Museum has the right to end this discount early.

Offer valid 7/01/2010 - 9/30/2010

# Catch These Great Exhibits Before They're Gone!

## Joe Louis: Hometown Hero

Now through September 15th

This comprehensive exhibition on the life of an iconic Detroit native is 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. Muhammad Ali said of Joe Louis, "I just give lip service to being the greatest. He was the greatest." The sportswriter, Jimmy Cannon, summed the Brown Bomber up best when he wrote; "He was a credit to his race – the human race."



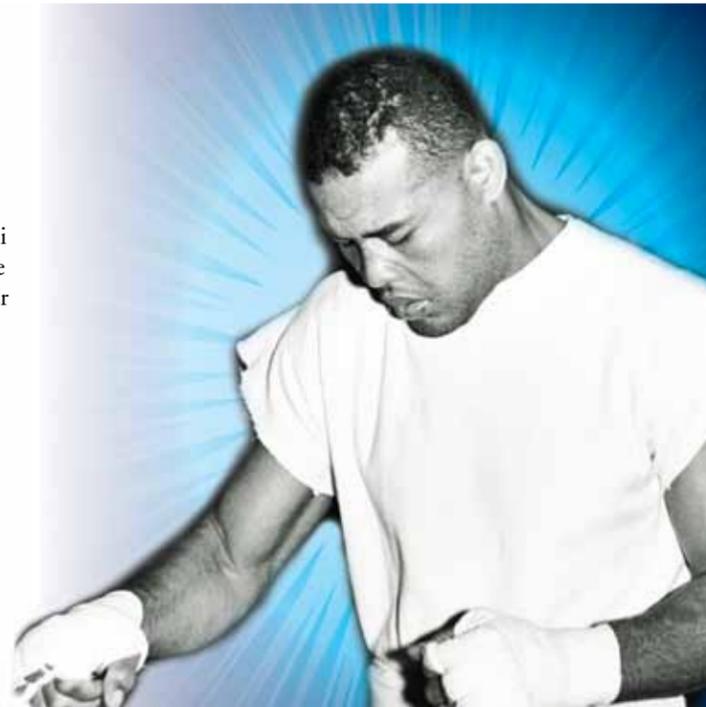
## Celebrating Figurative Art: The Works of Mychael Shane, Zeina Carla Washington, and Denemours L. Lockett

Now through August 22nd

The works of art created by the artists featured in Celebrating the Figure are strikingly different from each other in several ways. Each artist has his or her own style, medium, and palette. Mychael Shane is a scratchboard artist who uses a multiplicity of lines to create stark black and white images. Zeina Carla Washington is a mixed-media artist whose paintings are created with vibrant colors. Illustration artist, Denemours L. Lockett, uses pencils to create stunning, detailed works often in black, white, and blue, as well as in warm, muted colors.

Although each artist is unique in his or her approach to creating art, they also have something in common: their penchant for creating figurative art. Moreover, their objectives are obviously the same—to present people, especially African Americans, with beauty, dignity and pride.

This exhibition was organized as part of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History Contemporary Artist Program.

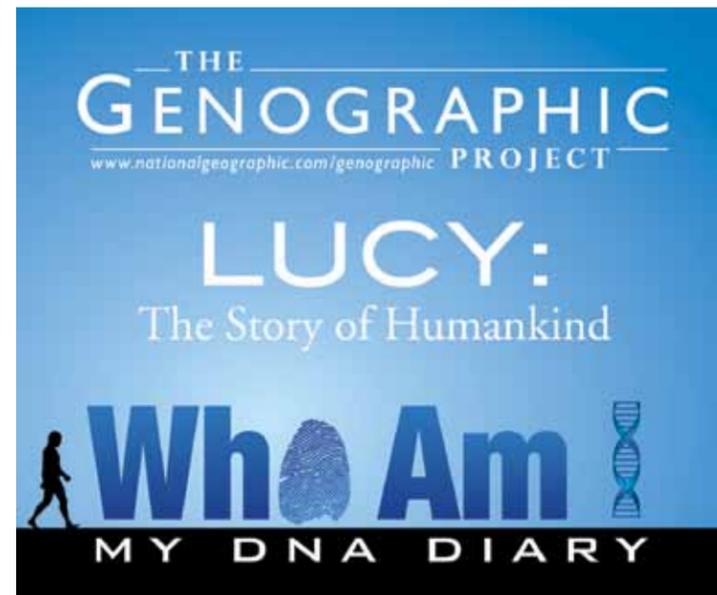


## Who Am I? My DNA Diary

Now through October 3rd

Who Am I? My DNA Diary is 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 challenges 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 are encouraged to participate in this project by purchasing their own participation kit from the Museum store and submitting their personal DNA sample for analysis.



## Support Our Museum

Your support is vital to helping the Charles H. Wright Museum fulfill its mission to provide "learning opportunities, exhibitions, programs and events based on collections and research that explore the diverse history and culture of African Americans and their African origins."

Gifts from individuals are a vital source of operating support for the Museum. Your gift helps fund and maintain the Museum's ongoing exhibits, programs and special events, and is an investment in the ongoing viability of the largest African American museum in the world!

### BECOME A MEMBER

Join the Charles H. Wright Museum to receive these great benefits:

- Personalized Membership Card
- Free admission to the galleries
- 10% discount in Museum Store
- Invitations and advance notice of special events
- Members' discount on selected programs

### MAKE A DONATION

There are many ways to support the Museum by using various gift designations and ways to give. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding your contribution at (313) 494-5872.

### VOLUNTEER

The Museum couldn't maintain its high caliber of service without its dedicated volunteers! Call (313) 494-5826 to inquire about upcoming volunteer orientation dates.

## Visitors' Voices

*My friend and I (two senior Caucasian males) visited the museum today for the first time. I have been curious about what was in it for years, and whenever I went to the Science museum, I told myself that I must see what is in the Wright museum. Well, today I did just that. In addition to the beautiful building and the beautifully designed exhibit on the history of African origins, slave trading, slavery, emancipation and moving up, we were extremely positively impressed with the very warm greeting and being made to feel so welcome by your greeters and staff members - specifically Sylvia and Jackie. They were exceptional.*

*In addition to taking what appeared to be a personal interest in our enjoying our stay, we were also impressed with their knowledge and intelligent answers to the questions we asked. We thoroughly enjoyed our interactions with them and wanted you to know how much more pleasant our visit was because of them. We certainly intend to visit your museum again, particularly because we did not get to see all that you have available to view.*

*Sincerely,  
Mark S. Roth, M.D.*

## Current Exhibitions

**Crowning Glories: Status, Style, and Self-Expression**  
through September 7, 2010

**Joe Louis: Hometown Hero**  
through September 15, 2010

**Who Am I: My DNA Diary**  
through October 3, 2010

**Celebrating Figurative Art**  
through August 22, 2010

**And Still We Rise: Our Journey Through African American History and Culture** (ongoing)

## Corporate Partners Play a BIG Role at the Museum

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History could not present the programs or build the exciting and captivating exhibitions that it does without the aid of corporate partners. The 2010 partners are:

- Aetna Insurance Foundation
- Bank of America
- DTE Energy Foundation
- Erb Family Foundation
- Ford Motor Company
- JP Morgan Chase
- Masco Corporation Foundation
- Yazaki North America, Inc.

Bank of America



DTE Energy Foundation



*On April 24th, 2010, the 6th grade students who attend the Jackson Arts And Technology Academy in Jackson, Michigan would like to thank the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History for one of the most exciting, educational, interactive museum tours they have ever experienced.*

*The museum staff has my highest regards. The staff displayed a high level of patience, compassion, professionalism, knowledge, and respect toward the diverse group of students which contributed to one of the most memorable experiences they will cherish for the rest of their lives.*

*Sincerely Yours,  
Thomas K. Burke*



This newsletter made possible by the generous support of the Target Corporation