



**BUTLER  
UNIVERSITY**

**Department of Diversity Programs**

Efroymsen Diversity Center  
4600 Sunset Avenue  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46208-3485  
(317) 940-6570  
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**Butler University  
Celebration of Diversity**

Butler University's Celebration of Diversity was implemented in 1987 under the auspices of the Office of Multicultural Affairs to create awareness and campus recognition of the contributions of African-Americans to American history and society.

What began as a university observance of African-American History month has evolved into a Butler community collaborative effort that encompasses African-American History month, Women's History month, the King Holiday observance, and the Hispanic Heritage Celebration, as well as special events and multicultural programs throughout the academic year. Celebration of Diversity has been expanded to include multicultural programs that focus on Asian and Native American culture and GLBT/alternative lifestyle issues.

Celebration of Diversity provides a comprehensive analysis of the importance of diversity within our global history and culture. Promoting ethnic diversity is an integral goal stated in the Butler University mission statement. The celebration of diversity, through multicultural interaction and awareness, facilitates a greater appreciation of the inherent complexities and commonalities of our global community.

The goals of Celebration of Diversity are:

- To focus attention on current issues related to diversity, multiculturalism, and race relations that affect the Butler and greater Indianapolis community, as well as the global society.
- To present high-profile multicultural events to facilitate cross-cultural interaction and promote cultural exploration, awareness and sensitivity.
- To create unique opportunities for dialogue and educational experiences with multicultural scholars, dignitaries and personalities who advocate diverse cultural perspectives.
- To examine and challenge racial and cultural stereotypes that create and strengthen barriers to multicultural communication, interaction and respect.

Serving the Butler and greater Indianapolis community, Celebration of Diversity has become one of the largest multicultural collegiate observances in the Midwest, hosting over 20,000 people in the last decade. The population served includes Butler students, faculty, staff and alumni, area high school and college students, Indianapolis community leaders and residents, and student and faculty groups from other Indiana colleges and universities. Programmatic highlights include:

- Celebration of Diversity Distinguished Lecture Series
- African-American Music Heritage Festival, featuring the **annual Butler University GospelFest**
- Women's History Month programs
- Hispanic Heritage Celebration
- Fall Study Tour
- Butler Ethnic Festival
- Reflections Film Series and Dialogue
- Annual student sponsored service projects, educational programs and events.

(cont.)



**Butler University  
Celebration of Diversity Distinguished Lecture Series**

The Celebration of Diversity Distinguished Lecture Series, implemented in 1987, and the Visiting African-American Scholars Program, implemented in 1989, were developed to provide the Butler and greater Indianapolis community increased interaction with outstanding dignitaries and scholars through short-term campus visits. **In 2002, the Celebration of Diversity Distinguished Lecture Series became a Collaborative Diversity Initiative between Butler University and the Office of the Mayor, City of Indianapolis, with generous support from the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, Vectren Corporation, Allison Transmission and Anthem Blue Cross - Blue Shield.** The mission and purpose of this partnership is to:

- Support the Mayor's commitment to race relations within the Indianapolis community; and
- Combine efforts to develop a sense of awareness and understanding of differences and similarities among people of different races through increased dialogue and cultural interaction.

**Past Lecturers/Performances – 1987-2007**

**Academicians**

Dr. Lionel C. Barrow (1989)  
Dr. Janice Hale Benson (1989)  
Dr. Jacqueline Fleming (1990)  
Dr. Asa Hilliard (1991)  
Dr. Vivian Gordan (1992)  
Dr. Maki Mandela, daughter of former President Nelson Mandela (1995)  
Dr. Ted Williams (1991)  
Dr. Michael Eric Dyson (2001)  
Dr. Manning Marable (2002)  
Dr. Cornel West (2003)  
Dr. Lee Jones (2003)  
Linda Brown Thompson and Cheryl Brown Henderson (Brown vs. Board of Education)  
(November, 2004)  
**Dr. Mae C. Jemison, Astronaut, Physician – First African –American Woman in Space  
(March, 2006)**  
**Dr. Cornel West and Dr. Michael Eric Dyson (April, 2006)**  
**Dr. John Hope Franklin and Dr. Henry Louis Gates – Distinguished Historians (April, 2007)**

**Civil/Human Rights Activists**

Julian Bond (2000)  
Dr. Benjamin Chavis (1995)  
Morris Dees (1998)



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Dr. James Farmer (1992)  
Jennifer Harbury (1999)  
Dr. Joseph Lowery (1990)  
Myrlie Evers-Williams (1997)  
**Coretta Scott King (2002)**

**\*\*\*Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2002)**

Shoshana Johnson – First African-American P.O.W. (March, 2004)

Kweisi Mfume, Former President and CEO, NAACP (February, 2005)

### Government Officials

Dr. M. Joycelyn Elders, Surgeon General of the United States (1994)

Dr. Phakamile Gongo, Secretary General of the U.S. South African Embassy (1996)

**President William Jefferson Clinton, 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States (November, 2005)**

**The Honorable J.C. Watts, Statesman and Former Congressman (January, 2006)**

**President George H.W. Bush, 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States (March, 2006)**

### Distinguished Poets and Authors

Maya Angelou (1988, 1989)

Amiri Baraka (1996)

Gwendolyn Brooks (1991)

Lucille Clifton (1993)

Nikki Giovanni (1994)

Derek Walcott (1991)

\*bell hooks (2002)

\*\*Mari Evans (2003)

\*\*Salmon Rushdie (2003)

\*Charles Johnson (2003)

\*\*Amy Tan (September, 2004)

**Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez – Best-selling Novelist and one of Time Magazine’s “25 Most Influential Hispanics in America” (March, 2007)**

**Maxine Hong Kingston – Distinguished Poet, Author and Activist (April, 2007)**

### Musical Artists/Entertainment/Media Personalities/Theatrical Performances

Kimberly Aiken – Miss America (1995)

Margaret Avery – Actress (1987)

Martina Arroyo – Opera Star (1990)

Dr. Bertice Berry – Sociologist, Talk Show Hostess, Author, Actress (1997)

Spike Lee – Distinguished Writer/Director/Actor (1993)

***The Meeting* (1991)**

Carole Simpson – ABC Senior News Anchor/Correspondent (1989)

Sinbad – Actor/Comedian (2000)

Robert Townsend – Actor/Director/Comedian (1996)

William Warfield – Distinguished Opera Star (1993)

Tavis Smiley – Distinguished Broadcast Journalist (2003)

Edward James Olmos – Distinguished Actor and Human Rights Activist (September, 2003)

Russell Simmons – Multimedia Mogul, Philanthropist, and Political Activist (November, 2003)



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Russell Simmons presents *Def Poetry Jam* (November, 2003)

*It's Showtime at The Apollo on Tour* (January, 2004)

Harry Belafonte – Legendary Entertainer and Humanitarian (February, 2004)

Danny Glover – Award-winning Actor, Producer and Human Rights Activist (January, 2005)

Arturo Sandoval – Grammy- award-winning Jazz and Classical Musician (April, 2005)

**Soledad O'Brien – Distinguished Broadcast Journalist, CNN Anchor (October, 2005)**

**Susan L. Taylor – Author, Entrepreneur and Editorial Director of *Essence* Magazine (October, 2006)**

**\*Spirit and Place Festival Public Conversation Speaker**

**\*\* Co-Sponsored with the Butler Visiting Writers Series**

**\*\*\* Butler Commencement Speaker**