



Institute on Ethnicity, Culture,  
and the Modern Experience

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**29th ANNUAL MARION THOMPSON WRIGHT LECTURE SERIES  
Commemorates NAACP Centennial, Lincoln Bicentennial**

Two significant anniversaries in the history of the American republic will be commemorated at the 29<sup>th</sup> annual Marion Thompson Wright Lecture Series, one of New Jersey's oldest and most highly esteemed Black History Month events, on Saturday, February 21, 2009. The conference will take place beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Paul Robeson Campus Center on the Newark campus of Rutgers University, 350 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

The 2009 conference, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: Lincoln, the NAACP, and the World They Created* will acknowledge the significance of the bicentennial anniversary of President Lincoln's birth and the centennial anniversary of the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The keynote Marion Thompson Wright Lectures will be given by Deborah Gray White, Board of Governors Professor of History, Rutgers University and Bob Herbert, Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times. Afternoon speakers include Professor James Oakes, The City University of New York and Professor Kenneth Mack, Harvard Law School. The afternoon presentations will be followed by a reception in the Paul Robeson Gallery, featuring entertainment by the Bradford Hayes jazz trio.

The complicated resonance of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in many ways set the stage for the urgency and activism that marked the formation of the NAACP in 1909, according to Dr. Clement Price, director of the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience and a distinguished service professor of History at Rutgers University-Newark.

"Abraham Lincoln's decision to make the emancipation of the South's slaves an objective of the Union's triumph over the Confederacy was his shining hour as president," explains Dr.

Price. "And the decision by African Americans and white progressives in 1909 to give a deeper meaning to black freedom by starting the NAACP was arguably among the most important decisions of the last century. Lincoln and the NAACP are linked by the precious and mystical cords of history, memory and freedom in American life."

The lecture series was co-founded in 1981 by Dr. Price and Giles R. Wright, from the New Jersey Historical Commission. Over the past 28 years, the conference has drawn thousands of people to the Rutgers-Newark campus in observance of Black History Month, and has attracted some of the nation's foremost scholars and humanists who are experts in the field of African and African American history and culture. One of the oldest and most prestigious events of its kind, the MTW lecture series offers a forum for scholars and non-academics to share their thoughts and exchange ideas and sustains wide public interest in history, the humanities and life-long learning.

The annual conference was named for East Orange native Dr. Marion Thompson Wright, a pioneer in African American historiography and race relations in New Jersey, who served for many years on the faculty of Howard University. An honors graduate of Newark's Barringer High School and Columbia University's Teachers College Class of 1938, she was the first professionally trained woman historian in the United States.

The program is being mounted as an important Rutgers University resource for public scholarship and civic discourse in greater Newark and is sponsored by the Institute; the Federated Department of History, Rutgers-Newark and the New Jersey Institute of Technology; and the New Jersey Historical Commission/Department of State. The conference receives additional support from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, and Rutgers Committee to Advance Our Common Purposes.

For additional information about the program, visit the Institute's website at: <http://ethnicity.rutgers.edu>, or contact Marisa Pierson, Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience, 973.353.3896, or [mpierson@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:mpierson@andromeda.rutgers.edu).

*Robeson Campus Center is wheelchair-accessible, as is the Rutgers-Newark campus. Rutgers-Newark can be reached by New Jersey Transit buses and trains, the PATH train and Amtrak from New York City, and by Newark City Subway. Metered parking is available on University Avenue and at Rutgers-Newark's public parking garage, at 200 University Ave. Printable campus maps and driving directions are available online at: <http://www.newark.rutgers.edu/maps/index.php>*