

**27<sup>th</sup> Annual Zora Neale Hurston Festival™ of the Arts and Humanities Commemorates  
125<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Festival Namesake with Inspired Dinner, Zora Neale Hurston Society  
Keynote Address and Main Stage Performances by Grammy Award Winning Isley  
Brothers and R&B Sensation KEM**

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**Festival Takes Place January 23-31, 2016 in Historic Eatonville, Maitland and Orange County Florida**

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**ZORA!™ Festival NEWS RELEASE**



**For Immediate Release:**

Orlando/Eatonville – January 12, 2016 -The twenty seventh annual **Zora Neale Hurston Festival™ of the Arts and Humanities (ZORA!™ Festival)** is set to be a celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of festival namesake writer, anthropologist and folklorist **Zora Neale Hurston**, January 23-31, 2016 in historic Eatonville, Maitland and Orange County Florida. **ZORA!™ Festival** is a multi-day, multi-disciplinary event that commemorates the life of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Renaissance woman Zora Neale Hurston; her hometown, Eatonville and the cultural contributions people of African ancestry have made to the United States and the world.

“Hurston’s body of work and unique style transcends time as she remains highly regarded as one of the shining stars of the Harlem Renaissance who continues to fascinate festival loyalists worldwide. As the event producers, we the **Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community (P.E.C.)** are proud that **ZORA!™ Festival** has become one of the largest and oldest cultural arts events in Central Florida. We are also grateful support for the continued of our sponsors such as our Presenting Sponsor **Orange County Government** through the Arts & Cultural Affairs Programs as well as our generous, superb volunteers”, said N.Y. Nathiri, executive director, P.E.C.

**ZORA!™ Festival Highlights**

Festival headliners include renowned scholars, distinguished elders, fine artists and legendary entertainers. Festival producers have put together a stellar amalgam of educational programming, cultural presentations, artist’s talks, expert workshops, heritage talks and tours, theatrical performances, musical concerts, themed parties and special events.

**Saturday January 23**

Among **ZORA!™ Festival** highlighted programming is **Dinner “Inspired by Zora”**, based on the book *Zora Neale Hurston on Florida Food* by Fred Opie, Ph.D. which officially kicks-off the festival at Holy Trinity Reception & Conference Center in Maitland, Florida. Dr. Opie is Professor of History and Foodways at Babson College in Massachusetts and is one of the nation’s foremost authorities on Food Traditions; Food Systems; Elections; Movements; and Migrations. Attendees will receive an original buffet meal, copy of *Zora Neale Hurston on Florida Food*, and a Zora Neale Hurston poster.

**Tuesday January 26**

Atlanta Based artist **Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier** will unveil *The Journey Projects: Eatonville* during the opening reception and gallery talk exhibition curated by **Jerushia, Graham** at the Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of

Fine Arts (The Hurston). The Journey Project: Eatonville is a celebration of residents and ancestors of Eatonville, including Zora Neale Hurston and Deacon Jones. The project is a combination of photographic images from Eatonville residents, and cyanotypes created by local youth on fabric that are woven together to create the final artwork. It is a community collaboration to commemorate and honor the townspeople and its most famous resident, Zora Neale Hurston.

### **Wednesday January 27**

Long time festival sponsor and partner, **University of Central Florida (UCF)** will present ***The Encounter: Baalu Cirma and Zora Neale Hurston*** featuring artists **Eric Gottsesman & Lynn Marshall-Linnemeier**. This evening of progressive programming is presented by UCF Africana Studies Program Director, **Professor Anthony Major**, and by the UCF School of Visual Arts and Design, **Ms. Yulia Tikhonova**, gallery director.

### **Thursday, January 28**

Popular **Zora's Cosmos Mobile Tour: Eatonville and Beyond** encompasses historic sites in Eatonville and Maitland and guests are treated to a regionally inspired fish fry lunch. In addition new **ZORA!™ Festival** partner, **Alternate ROOTS**, a southern based arts service organization, will host the **ZORA!™ Festival Welcome Reception** at the Winter Park Civic Center

### **Friday January 29**

Educational programming which begins at Rollin College Bush Auditorium remains one of the most comprehensive components of **ZORA!™ Festival**. ***In Conversation: The Zora Neale Hurston I Remember*** moderated by **Dr. Ben Brotemarkle**, Executive Director, Florida Historical Society will feature **Dr. Clifford Hurston, Jr., (Zora Neale Hurston's Nephew); Mrs. Vivian Hurston Bowden, (Zora Neale Hurston's Niece); and Mrs. Ella Johnson Dinkins**, (Daughter of Addie G. Johnson, Eatonville friend of Zora Neale Hurston).

2016 **ZORA!™ Festival** Academic Conference themed ***Reflection on the Global Legacy of Zora Neale Hurston on the Occasion of Her 125<sup>th</sup> Birthday*** will be held in Eatonville in the Sanctuary of the St. Lawrence African Methodist Episcopal Church. **Dr. Ruthe Sheffey**, Professor Emerita at Morgan State University and founder of the first Zora Neale Hurston Society, on an American college/university campus will keynote the Opening Plenary titled **Scholars' Reflection - A Panel Representing Three Generations**.

Highly anticipated theatrical debut of ***Spunk and the Harlem Literati***, an adaptation by Be Boyd, based on the play ***Spunk*** by Zora Neale Hurston will take place at University of Central Florida Theatre on the main campus. This dramatization of Zora Neale Hurston's award-winning short story intertwines with song and storytelling.

### **Friday January 29**

The Outdoor Festival of the Arts, sponsored by **White Glove Entertainment**, takes place and features interactive educational, arts, humanities and entertainment programming for youth to adults. Highlights include ***Zora Neale Hurston: Storyteller***, a play produced and directed by Jami Thomas, creative workshops for high school students and a ZORA! STEM Conference for middle school students.

### **Saturday January 30**

#### **ZORA!™ Festival Exclusive**

On Saturday morning, the **HATitude Party & Brunch will take place**.

R&B crooner, **KEM** will headline the main stage concert, along with iconic, highly awarded Rock & Roll Hall of Famers, **The Isley Brothers featuring Ronald and Ernie Isley**.

### **Sunday January 31**

A traditional worship service will take place at St. Lawrence African Methodist Episcopal Church, followed by continued outdoor activities.

**ZORA!™ Festival 2016** was made possible through the support of many partners including Orange County Government Arts & Cultural Affairs Program, White Glove Entertainment, Florida Blue, the UCF College of Arts & Humanities and the Zora Neale Hurston Institute for Documentary Studies, and Visit Orlando.

For the full schedule of events, visit: <http://zorafestival.org/full-schedule/full-schedule-3/>

For additional information on **ZORA!™ Festival 2016** events visit [www.zorafestival.org](http://www.zorafestival.org) or call 407-647-3307.

### **About the Association to Preservation the Eatonville Community, (P.E.C.)**

The Association to Preservation the Eatonville Community, is the nonprofit historic preservation group that organizes ZORA! Festival and whose mission is to enhance the resources of Eatonville, to educate the public about the town's historic and cultural significance, and to use the community's heritage and cultural vibrancy for its economic development.

### **Media Credentials**

Approved media will have access to interview areas, and red carpet arrivals, for which press has **RSVP'd** in advance and received written confirmation from **Tina Spencer**. This includes media opportunities for the speakers and artist who are in town, as well as other **ZORA!™ Festival** events. All media must email [tospencer@new-ideas-images.com](mailto:tospencer@new-ideas-images.com) to request access to cover these opportunities. We will do our best to honor all requests. For more information regarding the Zora! Festival visit [www.zorafestival.org](http://www.zorafestival.org)

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