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July 18, 2005

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U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN HARLEM WEEK 2005

African-American Stamp Collection honored during month-long Harlem festivities

July 19, 2005 (New York, NY) – In its continuing effort to highlight the importance of preserving African-American history and culture through stamp collecting, the **U.S. Postal Service** will honor the **Postal Service African-American Stamp Collection** during several of New York's famed **Harlem Week 2005** events.

The Postal Service will kick off their Harlem Week involvement with a discussion panel entitled *More than Postage: The Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and James Baldwin Stamps* at the 6th Annual Harlem Book Fair this **Saturday, July 23 from noon to 1:15 PM** at **Countee Cullen Library in Harlem**.

Moderated by Postal Service public affairs/communications manager **Monica Hand** and featuring poet **Haki R. Madhubuti**, artist/stamp designer **Barbara Higgins Bond**, James Baldwin's niece **Aisha Karefa-Smart**, and ESPER (Ebony Society of Philatelic Events and Reflections) president **Manuel Gilyard**, the panel will focus on the literary and historical contributions of **Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and James Baldwin** and the difference it makes having their images grace U.S. postage stamps.

"The recognition that is being given to Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and James Baldwin by printing their likeness on a United States postage stamp recognizes their literary achievements and serves as a source of pride to all people of African descent," says panelist Madhubuti. "These faces educate everyone to the fact that there are people of color who have written great literary works."

"The addition of the James Baldwin postage stamp to the African-American stamp collection shows how postage stamps have become a part of American popular culture," maintains Karefa-Smart. "It provides a way for Americans who identify with James Baldwin and what he represented to show their appreciation and support his legacy."

The first U.S. stamp to recognize an African American (Booker T. Washington) was issued in 1940. Today, there are hundreds of U.S. stamps commemorating the achievements of African Americans including recent issues of stamps depicting Langston Hughes (2002), Zora Neale Hurston (2003) and James Baldwin (2004).

"These writers addressed American race relations and celebrated African-American culture in the United States," says panel moderator Hand. "Their work embraced a host of socio-economic issues that are relevant today. The Postal Service is happy to honor their contributions and to do its part to keep their stories alive."

What would Hughes, Hurston and Baldwin think about being pictured on postage stamps? How does this honor carry on their legacy? What difference does it make? Who should be next? These questions and more

will be discussed this **Saturday, July 23** during the panel, *More than Postage: The Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and James Baldwin Stamps* at Countee Cullen Library.

WHAT: *More than Postage: The Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and James Baldwin Stamps*

WHO: Moderator – Monica Hand (USPS)

Panelists – Haki R. Madhubuti (poet/publisher), Barbara Higgins Bond (artist/stamp designer), Aisha Karefa-Smart (James Baldwin's niece), Manuel Gilyard (ESPER)

WHERE: Countee Cullen Library, 2nd Fl, Conference Room A
104 West 136th Street [near Lenox Ave.]
New York, NY 10030-2695

WHEN: Saturday, July 23, 2005

TIME: 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM

The Postal Service will also be involved in the following Harlem Week 2005 events:

1. "A Great Day in Harlem" – July 31, 2005

Ulysses S. Grant National Memorial Park
(W. 122nd St. & Riverside Drive)
Noon – 9:00 PM

A day of international exhibitors and vendors displaying a variety of exotic dishes, cultural arts, crafts, clothing, and more! The USPS will have their own booth featuring African-American stamp art, stamp-collecting information and keepsakes.

2. NY City Economic Development Awards Luncheon and Expo – August 9, 2005

Columbia University
115th Street and Broadway
11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

This event will feature important presentations on major development projects city-wide and will recognize outstanding business and governmental executives who contribute to the economic prosperity and revitalization of New York City. The USPS will host a demo presentation of their latest online Click N' Ship and NetPost products and services.

3. Harlem Day – August 21, 2005

135th Street from 5th to St. Nicholas Aves.
10:00 AM – 8:00 PM

A full day celebrating the best of Harlem, including an international exhibitors and vendors' expo, an auto show, and a health fair. The USPS will display a booth featuring African-American stamp art, stamp-collecting information and keepsakes.

4. Tri-State Historic Black College Reunion Reception – August 18, 2005

By invitation only

Gala honoring historic Black colleges and universities, presidents, and their alumni. The USPS will have a booth featuring information on Postal Service careers, African-American Stamps, and the latest online Click N' Ship and NetPost products and services.

5. National Black Sports & Entertainment Hall of Fame Gala – August 30, 2005

Aaron Davis Hall
133rd Street & Convent Avenue
5:30 P.M.

An induction and gala reception as well as the 2005 HARLEM WEEK Awards Program. Legendary singer and 2005 USPS stamp honoree Marian Anderson will be inducted into the National Black Sports & Entertainment Hall of Fame. The USPS will be in attendance to honor Anderson.

ABOUT THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume-some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year-and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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