

## Memorial Service for UF English Professor James Haskins

*September 13, 2005*

**WHAT:** A memorial service for UF English Professor James Haskins who died on July 6, 2005.

**WHEN:** Monday, September 19, 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** University Memorial Auditorium on UF's campus.

**BACKGROUND:** James Haskins, who had taught at UF since 1977, died in New York City on July 6 of complications from emphysema. He was 63. Author of more than 100 books on African Americans, including Rosa Parks, Muhammad Ali and Stevie Wonder, Haskins is probably best known for his book *The Cotton Club*, which was the basis for the 1984 movie starring Richard Gere, Diane Lane and Laurence Fishburne. He recently published *Delivering Justice: W. W. Law and the Great Savannah Boycott*. An elementary school teacher in Harlem during the 1960s, Haskins had trouble finding books on African-American role models. His life's mission was to ensure children had literature to read on influential black Americans.

"James Haskins was one of the most published authors of the 20th and 21st centuries," said UF anthropologist and colleague Irma McClaurin. "That his subject matter was the history, culture, and lives of African Americans makes his achievements all the more remarkable since the great American myth is that African Americans have contributed little to the building of this great nation. Jim proved this myth to be false in its entirety, using only his incredible mind, his fascination with the somewhat obscure, and his mighty pen."

An endowment fund has been established to support the James Haskins Visiting Scholar Fellowship through the African American Studies Program and the James Haskins Collection in African American Literature in the Special and Area Studies Collections of the George A. Smathers Libraries. Contributions to support one or both of these programs may be sent to the James Haskins Endowment Fund at the UF Foundation, PO Box 14425, Gainesville, FL 32604.

The gated parking lots in front of Criser and Tigert Halls will open at 2:30 p.m. for visitor parking.

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