Significant Voices’ to feature black authors from Louisiana

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Editor

Six different black authors from Louisiana will be featured through readings and discussions of their work: “Significant Voices: 20th Century African-American Writers” will begin Feb. 21 and run through March 28.

“Significant Voices” will feature six writers in literary genres from poetry to prose and the short story (the novel). Pinkie Gordon Lane, Kalamu Ya Salaam, Mona Lisa Saloy, Ernest J. Gaines, Brenda Marie Osbey and Yusef Komunyakaa will all participate in the series.

“These significant voices are certainly the most important writers in African-American literature in Louisiana, perhaps the South and the nation,” said David Barry, dean for the College of Liberal Arts, the primary sponsor of the event. “It is a great pleasure to collaborate with the Summer Cultural Arts Series and the Department of Parks & Recreation with Lafayette Consolidated Government in fostering conversations between USL and the community we serve. This type of program instills pride in the community, but it also underscores the importance of education and creativity for future generations.”

Lane, author of “The Girl at the Window,” “I Never Scream,” and “Wind Thoughts” will be the first author of the series, Feb. 21 at 3 p.m. in the USL Bayou Bijou Theatre. Lane, of Philadelphia, is professor emerita of Southern University in Baton Rouge; she taught there for 26 years, serving 12 years as chair of the English Department.

Lane was the first black woman to earn a doctorate from Louisiana State University at a time when LSU was just emerging from segregated enrollment. From 1989 to 1992, she became the first African-American appointed by the governor to serve as the poet laureate of Louisiana. In 1997, her poem “Lyric: I Am Looking At Music” was recited by the leading character in the film “Love Jones.” Lane’s “voice” is described as “animated, limber and warmly spiritual.”

“For a long time, presenting this project was our vision,” said event organizer Kathy Ball. “Over the past eight months, it became our passion. Now, we attempt to provide an environment where we hope it will be a pleasure to spend Sunday afternoons listening to the remarkable body of works created by six 20th century voices.”

Submitted Photo

Pinkie Gordon Lane’s works will be featured as part of the “Significant Voices” series Feb. 21 at the Bayou Bijou Theatre. The first program will take place at the Bayou Bijou Theatre; however all subsequent programs will be held at the Heymann Park Recreation Center. All programs are from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. and are free and open to the general public.