

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Redefining African American:  
“What’s at Stake?”  
Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006**

**January 21, 2006:** -- Friday February 3, 2006 the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center/ African Diaspora Institute and the Global Afro Latino and Caribbean Initiative will host a series of roundtable discussions, where internationally renowned experts will address the question of “Redefining African American: What’s at Stake?”. The panel discussion, held at Hunter CUNY (695 Park Avenue), is free and open to the public.

**Is the term "African American" still viable in the 21st Century?** Does the term African American include or exclude the diversity of African descendant populations that now reside within the nation’s borders? Does the term African American need to be redefined? Why, and towards what concrete goals? Demographics indicate that within the United States there is an expanding global population of African descendents. These populations remain connected to their root cultures while influencing the civil society of their new home. The cultures of Africa, the Caribbean, Latin and Central America that celebrate and honor their African heritage in the United States alongside African Americans with a long history in this country reflect a population that reunites the African Diaspora. The tapestry of cultures that share African heritage are all part of a historical and cultural journey. The question posed to scholars and community rooted leaders in this one day conference.

James Early, Keynote speaker and Director of the Cultural Heritage Policy at the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage says redefining African American is “understanding the diversity that informs the social realities of African Americans in the US is indispensable to maximizing the pursuit and achievement of justice and equality”. Panelists for this discussion will include Clarence Lusane, School of International Service, at American University; Padre Glyn Jemmott Nelson, Mexico Negro Asociación Civil, Mexico; Basil Wilson, Senior Vice President and Provost of the Office of Academic Affairs, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY; Miriam Jiménez Román, The Afro-Latino Project, New York; and Dr. Agustin Lao-Montes, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

J. Michael Turner, Co-director of Global Afro Latino & Caribbean Studies Initiative, professor of History at Hunter College, CUNY will moderate this panel of esteemed cultural scholars along with Zakiya Carr-Johnson, Inter-American Development Bank, Social Inclusion Trust Fund, Social Programs Division (SDS/SOC). Mr. Turner says, “Given the recent rapidly increasing Latino emigrant population to the U.S., the number of Afro Latinos also is increasing. "African American" currently could be a recent emigrant from Honduras, Colombia, or Mexico requiring social services, employment opportunities, or

political representation that in the past had gone to African Americans born in the United States. How do these `new` African Americans fit into the traditional "American Dream"? International scholars will analyze this new national reality and its implications for civil rights, human rights, and ethnic studies programs within the U.S.

“Redefining African American: What’s at Stake?” is one of two events that will take place addressing the issue of race in America as part of CCC’s Black History Month celebration.

This event will be held on Friday - February 3, 2006, 4:00 -7:00 PM, at The Ida K. Lang Recital Hall Hunter College, CUNY, 695 Park Avenue, Room 424 Hunter North New York City. (Enter on 68th Street between Lexington Ave & Park Avenue, North side of the street)

For more information please call 212.772.4285 or visit [www.cccadi.org](http://www.cccadi.org). Email inquiries to [galci@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:galci@hunter.cuny.edu).

This event is co-sponsored by the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center/ African Diaspora Institute and the Global Afro Latino and Caribbean Initiative and was made possible with generous funding from the Ford Foundation and Inter-American Foundation.

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## **LIST OF ACTIVITIES/SCHEDULE**

Feb. 1, 2006

Guest panelists and Keynote speaker arrive in New York.

Feb. 2, 2006

Field visits to Afro Latino grassroots CBOs/NGOs/Human Rights groups within Greater New York City.

Participating guests interviews with Media.

Feb. 3, 2006

Morning

Visit and meeting with Education Division at El Museo Del Barrio,

Visit to New York Historical Society’s landmark exhibit on “Slavery in New York”

2 – 7 pm

Pre-panel and Panel discussion focused on the need for Redefining of the term African American

7-8 pm- Media interviews at event location:

The Ida K. Lang Recital Hall

Hunter College, CUNY

Room424 Hunter North.

695 Park Avenue

New York NY 10021

(Enter on 68th Street between Lexington Avenue & Park Avenue)

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**Participants Bios**

**James Courts Early, Keynote Speaker**

James Early is Director of Cultural Heritage Policy Studies at the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Since 1984, Mr. Early has served in various positions at the Smithsonian Institution, including Assistant Provost for Educational and Cultural Programs, Assistant Secretary for Education and Public Service, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Service, and Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Public Service.

Over the course of a 25-year professional career, Mr. Early consistently recognizes the integrity of historically evolved values and cultures of African-American, Latino, Native-American, and Asian-Pacific American communities. He has worked with the incarcerated, taught high school and college level Spanish, written extensively on the politics of culture and has lectured in the US and overseas.

Prior to his work at the Smithsonian, Mr. Early served as a humanist administrator at the National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. Mr. Early is former producer, writer, and host of "Ten Minutes Left," a weekly radio segment of cultural, educational and political interviews and commentary on WHUR FM radio at Howard University where he was also research associate for programs and documentation.

**Miriam Jiménez Román**

Miriam Jiménez Román is a long-time scholar of Diaspora communities in the Americas, focusing on people of African descent. She has taught courses on race, ethnicity, and gender in Latin America and Caribbean at Binghamton, Brown and Columbia universities. She is the former Managing Editor and Editor of Centro: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. For over a decade, she researched and curated exhibitions at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, where she also served as the Assistant Director of the Scholars-in-Residence Program. Currently, Ms. Jimenez Roman is the general coordinator for The Afro-Latino Project, a research and resource center focusing on Black Latinos in the United States.

**Clarence Lusane, Ph.D.**

Professor Lusane's current research interests are in international race politics, human rights, and electoral politics. He teaches courses in comparative race relations, modern social movements, comparative politics of African and the Caribbean, black political theory and political behavior, and drug policy and the social impact of drug abuse and trafficking. Dr. Lusane is currently completing a book regarding Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice and their role in the construction of U.S. foreign policy.

Dr. Lusane has lectured and presented scholarly papers at a wide range of colleges and universities including Harvard, Georgetown, Yale, London School of Economics, and University of Paris among others. He is former Chairman of the Board of the National Alliance of Third World Journalists and has been a political and technical consultant to the

World Council of Churches, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and a number of elected officials and non-profit organizations. He worked as a British Council Atlantic Fellow for London Mayor Ken Livingstone investigating the impact of regional anti-racism legislation on the anti-racist movement in the UK. In 2002-2003, he served as Assistant Director of the 1990 Trust, one of the UK's largest and most important anti-racist, human rights non-governmental organizations.

### **Dr. Agustin Lao-Montes**

Dr. Augustin Lao-Montes is a Sociology Professor in the Department of Sociology, University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He has researched and is well versed on areas of race, ethnicity and nationhood; Latinidad; Puerto Rican history and music; the cultural politics of representation and self-representation; *transnationalism* and *diasporic* cultures; urban cultures and Latino/a social movements.

### **Basil Wilson, Ph.D.**

Dr. Wilson is the Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York. Provost Wilson began teaching at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 1974 in the African American Studies Department. The courses he taught reflected his interest in African American History, Caribbean Politics, Black Social and Intellectual thought, Comparative Politics and Globalization and Terrorism.

Dr. Wilson was appointed to the position of Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1990 by the CUNY Board of Trustees. During his fourteen years as the Provost, he continues to cultivate others towards the importance of teaching and learning at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. In addition to emphasizing the art of teaching, the Provost has promoted faculty research in criminal justice and related fields.

### **Zakiya Carr Johnson**

Zakiya Carr Johnson is currently at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC. She is charged with administering the Social Inclusion Trust Fund which invites Project Teams and Specialists from IDB Headquarters and Country Offices to submit proposals for financing activities aimed at supporting Bank operations studies and national policies to advance social inclusion of traditionally excluded populations in Latin American Countries.

Prior to her work with, Ms. Johnson was the Coordinator of Global Rights-Partners for Justice Program for Latin America, a human rights advocacy group that partners with local activists to develop skills essential to promoting equality. As Program Coordinator Ms. Carr Johnson designed and implemented programs in Brazil and Colombia to develop capacity within Latin American partner organizations.

**J. Michael Turner** is Associate Professor of African History and Latin American History in Hunter's History Department. A Co-founder of the Global Afro Latino and Caribbean Initiative (GALCI), GALCI has sought to collaborate with Afro Latino and Caribbean Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) throughout the Western Hemisphere to provide advocacy services for better access to multi-lateral funding organizations for Afro Latinos and Caribbean groups, and better inclusion of these groups within their home societies, or

for emigrant Afro Latino and Caribbean groups residing in the United States. He was also Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program at Hunter College-City University of New York (CUNY) from 1999 through 2005.

Turner spent five years working for the Ford Foundation in Brazil, where he was responsible for initiating the Foundation's work in Afro-Brazilian Affairs (1979-1985). He was the Loan Officer for Togo at the World Bank (1986-7), and served as project consultant for United Support of Artists for Africa ("We Are The World") in Mali, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique. In 1992, Turner was offered the position of Democracy/Governance Consultant for the U.S. Agency of International Development in Mozambique, managing the Democratic Initiatives Project that gave U.S. Government financial support for the 1994 democratic multiparty electoral process in Mozambique. Turner continues to serve as a Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Mozambique.

An elected member of the Council on Foreign Relations, his most recent publications have analyzed the emerging role of Afro Latinos within the international community, and the role of civil society and good governance practices in Mozambique. Turner studied African History and Latin American History at Yale University, the African Studies Program at Boston University, and Harvard University.

**Edna Roland** is the current International Affairs Advisor for the Municipality of Guarulhos, Brasil. She is a former UNESCO consultant in Brasilia for the Social and Human Science Division.