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A History in Photographs

From Praying Grounds to Spiritual Gifts

Jeffery Ivey, Photographer



Cleveland State University launched *Praying Grounds: African American Faith Communities, A Documentary and Oral History Project* in the summer of 2003. Initial funding came from Cleveland State University's Black Studies Program and the University Library, now known as the Michael Schwartz Library. The combined efforts of two student artists led to the creation of the official Praying Grounds logo, which incorporates an image of the baobab tree.



In April 2007, RASHAD presented “Religion, Race, and Rights in America: The View from Cleveland, Ohio” at the historic Cory United Methodist Church where Malcolm X delivered his “Ballot or the Bullet” speech in April 1964. Pictured here are panelists (left to right) Dr. Nishani Frazier, the Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle, Rev. Henry Curtis, and Richard Peery.



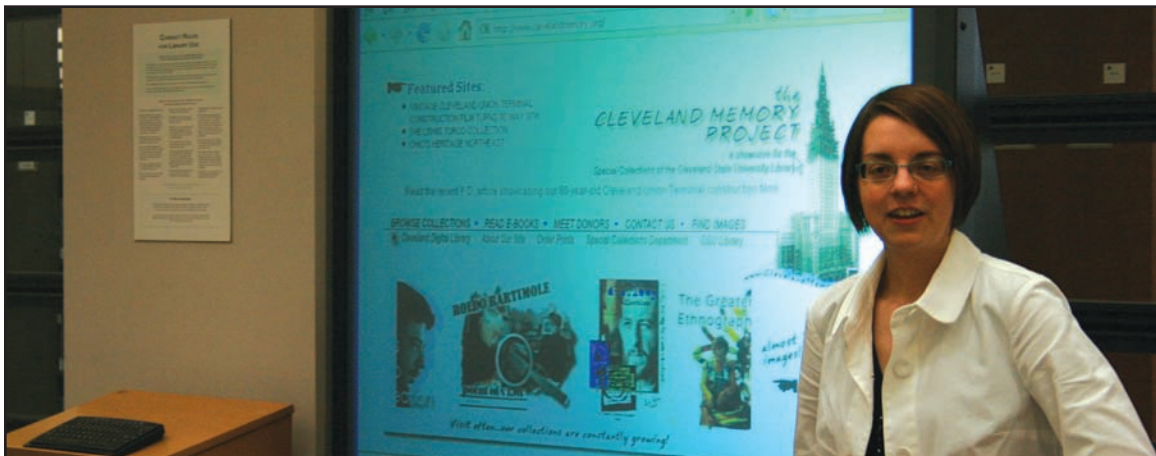
In 2007, members of the Wings Over Jordan Celebration Chorus performed in Cleveland State University's Music and Communication Building. Their performance was part of the kick-off reception for the year-long observance of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Wings Over Jordan. The late Rev. Glenn T. Settle, pastor of Cleveland's Gethsemane Baptist Church, organized the original choir in 1937, and the singers went on to earn international acclaim for their radio broadcasts and live performances of *a capella* arrangements of African American spirituals, traditional gospels, and other songs.



Audience members at the October 2007 Wings Over Jordan 70th Anniversary kick-off.



In November 2007, Dr. Margaret Pleasant Douroux (standing next to piano), a renowned composer of gospel music, conducted a choral music workshop for approximately 100 singers.



Kiffany Francis leads a library training session for *Praying Grounds*' student Research Assistants (2008).



In the summer of 2008, the students worked with library staff members to launch *Praying Grounds* online archive.



On October 27, 2008, Spiritual Gifts: A Professional Black Sacred Music Repertory Ensemble gave its debut performance at Trinity Cathedral (Cathedral Hall). The members of this non-profit, community-based organization worked with RASHAD to raise awareness of the music of the historic African American church. The singers are pictured here with the music director, David M. Thomas (front row, center).



The Spiritual Gifts Ensemble at the Western Reserve Historical Society in January 2009.



The Spiritual Gifts Ensemble on the stage of Severance Hall, home of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, in January 2009.



Prof. Maryjoyce Green (left), Director of Cleveland State University's Women's Comprehensive Program, and Dr. Regennia N. Williams at the March 2009 Women and Spirituality Symposium. (photo: Prester Pickett.)



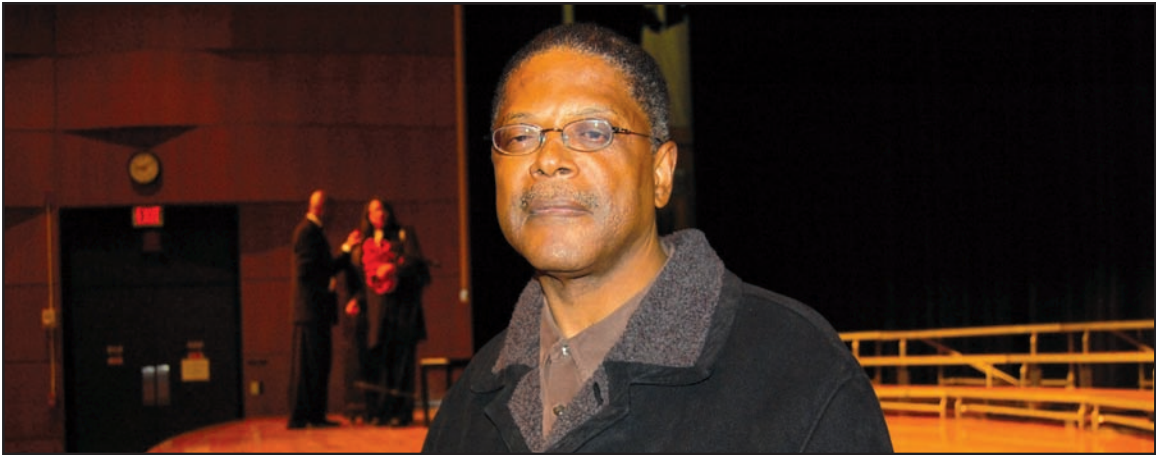
Dr. Joy Bostic, Assistant Professor of Religion at Case Western Reserve University, at the March 2009 Women and Spirituality Symposium. (photo: Prester Pickett)



The Greater Cleveland Choral Chapter of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses performed during the April 2009 Religious History and Sacred Music Institute. Thomas Andrew Dorsey, “The Father of Gospel Music,” founded the parent body in 1932.



The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, keynote speaker for the April 2009 Religious History and Sacred Music Institute.



The Rev. Dr. William Myers, founder and director of Cleveland's McCreary Center for African American Religious Studies, after Dr. Kirk-Duggan's April 2009 keynote lecture. The McCreary Center brought Dr. Kirk-Duggan to Cleveland for graduate seminar activities with its doctoral students.



Emory University's Dr. James Abbington conducted a choral music workshop during the April 2009 Religious History and Sacred Music Institute. The workshop took place in the nave of Cleveland's Trinity Cathedral, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio.



Singers at Dr. Abbington's choral music workshop.



Garret Jackson, employee of GIA Music, is pictured here with materials from GIA's African American Church Music Series, the source for music used in Dr. Abbington's workshop.



Female vocalists at the Abbington workshop.



Dr. James Abbington at the piano.



The violin section of The Melting Pot Orchestra, which accompanied the Spiritual Gifts Ensemble during its April 26, 2009 concert performance at Cleveland State University.



The Spiritual Gifts Ensemble performs its grand finale on April 26, 2009.



The Rev. Hilton O. Smith, Senior Vice President for Turner Construction, program sponsor for Spiritual Gifts' April 26, 2009 concert.



Student singers strike a pose outside CSU's Music and Communication Building following their performance for the May 1, 2009 Wings Over Jordan Choral Music Workshop.



Teretha Settle, CSU alumna and granddaughter of Wings Over Jordan's founder (Rev. Glenn T. Settle) addresses the audience at Wings' May 1, 2009 workshop.



The Rev. Dr. Valentino Lassiter, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Pastor in Residence at John Carroll University, delivered the keynote address for the Fall 2009 Religious History and Sacred Music Institute. His topic was "Spirituality and Justice." The Institute also included the October 24th Harvest Time concert and live recording featuring the New Spiritual Gifts Workshop Choir.

