

**For Immediate Release
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Cultural Critic Gerald L. Early Discusses Curt Flood, Muhammad Ali and Jackie Robinson

Cambridge – Gerald L. Early, Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters at Washington University in St. Louis, will discuss his cultural observations on three of the most important African American athletes of the 20th century – Curt Flood, Muhammad Ali and Jackie Robinson – during the Alain LeRoy Locke Lectures, a 3-day lecture series at Harvard University.

On the first day of the series, Early discusses the legacy of Curt Flood, the first player in Major League Baseball to challenge the infamous “reserve clause” which opened the doors to free agency. On the second day, Early tackles Muhammad Ali, known all over the world for his notorious trash talking, witty rhymes and unorthodox boxing style. On the final day of the series, Early comments on Jackie Robinson, a staunch civil rights activist, successful businessman and the first African American to play in Major League Baseball.

Early’s commentary is equal parts incisiveness, verve, affection, and grace, and it is this combination that has made him a sought-after contributor to mainstream and scholarly publications such as *The New York Times*, *Harper’s*, *The Nation*, *The Washington Post*, and *Newsweek*. Professor Early also served as a consultant on Ken Burns’s PBS documentaries *Jazz* and *Baseball*, HBO Productions, and is a frequent commentator on NPR’s *Fresh Air*.

The Alain LeRoy Locke Lectures are named after the godfather of the Harlem Renaissance, Alain LeRoy Locke (1885–1954). Co-sponsored by the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, the Department of African and African American Studies, and Basic *Civitas* Books, this series is sure to offer both sports fans and casual spectators timely observations on the legacy of these extraordinary sports figures.

Who: Gerald L. Early, Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters, Washington University in St. Louis

What: Alan LeRoy Locke Lecture Series

The Next Level of the Game: Cultural Observations of Three African American Athletes

- *The Significance of Curt Flood*
- *Muhammad Ali’s IQ and Muhammad Ali Abroad in the 1970s*
- *Jackie Robinson and the Korean War*

When: October 28-30, 2003. All lectures begin at 4 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Reception immediately following.

Where: Thompson Room, Barker Center, Harvard University, 12 Quincy Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge.

Free and open to the public. Wheelchair accessible.

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