

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

W. E. B. DU BOIS INSTITUTE FOR AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Barker Center • 12 Quincy Street • Cambridge, MA 02138-3879

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Literary Stars Gather at Harvard to Honor the 70th Birthday of Fellow Nobel Laureate and Nigerian Activist Wole Soyinka

Cambridge – On April 27, 2005, literary stars and scholars will gather at Harvard University's Institute of Politics to honor and celebrate the 70th birthday of Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka.

Dubbed "A Season of Laureates: Readings in Honor of the 70th Birthday of Wole Soyinka," the event will pay homage to literary giant and human rights activist Wole Soyinka with readings by fellow Nobel Laureates Nadine Gordimer, Toni Morrison, and Derek Walcott.

Born near Ibadan, Nigeria, Soyinka is world renowned for his numerous dramatic works, novels, essays, and poems. Known for his out-spoken criticism of the Nigerian government, especially during its civil war, Soyinka appealed in an article for a cease-fire between opposition groups and the government. As a result, he was arrested in 1967, accused of conspiring with the Biafra rebels, and was held as a political prisoner for 22 months until 1969. Currently, a the First Alphonse Fletcher Fellow at Harvard University's W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research, Soyinka received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986 and will also participate in the evening's festivities by reading from his own imaginative and ground-breaking work.

Hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., director of the Du Bois Institute, the event will feature some of the world's literary masters reading from their work. In addition, "A Season of Laureates" will include individual introductions by Homi F. Bhabha, Anne F. Rothenburg Professor of English and Literature, Harvard University; novelist Jamaica Kincaid, Visiting Lecturer on African and African American Studies and Literature, Harvard University; K. Anthony Appiah, Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy, Princeton University; and Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

This event is co-sponsored by Harvard University's W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research and the Harvard University Institute of Politics. For more information about the Du Bois Institute, go to www.fas.harvard.edu/~du_bois; for more information about the Institute of Politics, go to www.iop.harvard.edu.

- Who:** Nobel Laureates Wole Soyinka, Toni Morrison, Derek Walcott, Nadine Gordimer along with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., K. Anthony Appiah, Jamaica Kincaid, Margaret Marshall, Homi Bhabha.
- What:** "A Season of Laureates: Readings in Honor of the 70th Birthday of Wole Soyinka."
- When:** Wednesday, April 27, 2005, 6 P.M. – 8 P.M.
- Where:** John F. Kennedy Forum, JFK School of Government, Harvard University, 79 JFK Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge.
- Cost:** Free and open to the public. Tickets are not required for entry. Seating is general admission. Doors close at 6 P.M. For more information, please call the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute at 617.495.3611.

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