

LONG BIOGRAPHY OF DR. NJOKI McELROY

Renowned performance artist, professor, playwright and author, Dr. McElroy teaches Performance of Black Literature and African American Folklore for the Master of Liberal Studies program at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. She first developed the courses for the Performance Studies Department at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois where she taught for over 30 years.

Along with Joyce Carol Oates, Ntozake Shange and Rita Dove, Dr. McElroy's short story appears in the acclaimed anthology *From Daughters to Mothers: I've Always Meant to Tell You* *. Her other published works include: "The Ninth Day of May," *Common Bonds: Stories by and about Modern Texas Women***; "Keepers of the Faith," *Spiritual Autographs: Southern Women Tell their Stories****; "Episodes," *From Daughters & Sons: To Fathers: What I've Never Said*****; and "Present Moments," *Texas in Poetry******. Most of her short stories were written while in residence at the Ragdale in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Her plays which have been produced on stage at universities and public arenas throughout the country include: *Harlem House Rent Party*, *Blues is More than a Color*, *Everyday People* and *LaBakaire: Memoirs of Josephine Baker*. Described as "stories on stage" her plays explore the historical and sociological experiences of African Americans.

A master storyteller, Dr. McElroy has performed throughout the United States, Africa, Canada and the Caribbean. As a Ford Foundation Fellow she

gathered traditional African and Caribbean folktales. She conducts storytelling workshops for teachers and students in public and private schools, and for managers and executives for Fortune 500 companies. She is the founder and director of the “Back Home With the Folks Festival,” an annual folk art festival produced in Texas and Illinois.

Her one-woman performances include segments from her memoir, and portrayals of African-American women in the civil rights movement such as Mamie Till Mobley, mother of Emmett Till. Each performance reflects Dr. McElroy’s extensive travels, careful research and her enormous power and presence as communicator/performer.

As the Director of the Cultural Workshop of North Chicago, Dr. McElroy exposed urban youth to black culture and history. “Black Journey” written and directed by her turned into a touring production with Workshop members converting their youthful energies into artistic expressions. She is the recipient of the President of the United States Youth Opportunity Award.

Dr. McElroy and her late husband founded Black Fox Enterprises, a cosmetics and hair care company. She became the president of the company upon his death in 1978.

A graduate of Xavier University in New Orleans, she received her M.A. and Ph.D degrees from Northwestern University.

*Constance Warlowe, Editor. Hardcover. 1997. Pocket Books. ISBN:0671563246

**Susan Comer, Editor, Hardcover. 1990. Southern Methodist University Press. ISBN: 0870742876

***Jane Purtle, Editor, Pbk. 1999. Chicago Spectrum Press. ISBN: 1583740031

****Constance Warlowe, Editor. Hardcover. 2001. Story Line Press. ISBN: 15865400303

*****Billy Bob Hill, Editor. Hardcover. 2002. Texas Christian University. ISBN: 0875652670