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Press Release

City of Winston Salem embarked on with its newest piece of theatre arts history

Artist's Quilt Tackles Currency of Today's Black Theatre History Chronicling the World Renowned National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The idea that "fabric/fibers and a quilt" could hold a 28 year old biennial week –long theatre festival that features each season more the 300 performances, free drama and aesthetic workshops; participation by more than 250 theatre companies and visits religiously by stage, film and theatre celebrities and thousands of young and old theatre patrons is nothing less than a creative work of art to say the least.

Herman LeVern Jones (formerly Special Assistant to the Producer 89- 99 to the late Larry Leon Hamlin) in association with the **FACILITIES FOR THE ARTS ON SPRUCE FOUNDATION** of Winston Salem will present the work of Dr. Joan M. E. Gaither, a published Fiber Artist. We thank Mr. Richard Emmett (Chief Operating Officer of the Arts Council) for his interest and dedication in helping to share with the community this historical presentation in **honor of the late Larry Leon Hamlin, Artistic Director and founder of the National Black Theatre Festival (NBTF).**

THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL (1989-2011) THROUGH THE EYES OF FIBER ARTIST DR. JOAN M. E. GAITHER, subtitle **MARVTASTIC MEMORIES OF THE NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL CIRCA 1989-2011** will be presented at the historic NBTF from August 1-6, 2011 in the city of Winston Salem, NC at Womble Carlyle Gallery Lobby at the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts, located on 251 North Spruce Street, Winston-Salem, NC.

The art work quilt being presented is a history of the National Black Theatre Festival (NBTF) from 1989 – 2011. The work features a life size image of the late Larry Leon Hamlin, the Artistic Director and founder of the NBTF. It is a pictorial history of every play and actors, directors, and special guest from the beginning of the festival. It shows the actual city blocks where the festival is headquartered, and everything in-between. When it is viewed, first thoughts are how the Fiber Artist actually created this work. It takes hours to view. When Jones first observed the quilt he stated:



“ The quilt’s many fabrics, fibers, and textures have been brought together to form a mozaic form, as the same diverse of talents that has been brought to the festival to make it a Black Broadway”.

At the 2009 NBTF, Herman LeVern met Joan Gaither in the lobby of the main hotel on the last day of the festival. Their discussion was about the history of the festival. Dr. Gaither shared that she was a fiber artist and Herman LeVern asked “Could you do a history of the festival in quilt form?” Dr. Gaither stated “Yes, that’s what I do”. Jones did not know what he was asking, but shared with Ms Gaither **“I miss my friend, Larry Leon and I wish I could do something in his honor.”**

Two years later the quilt is born.

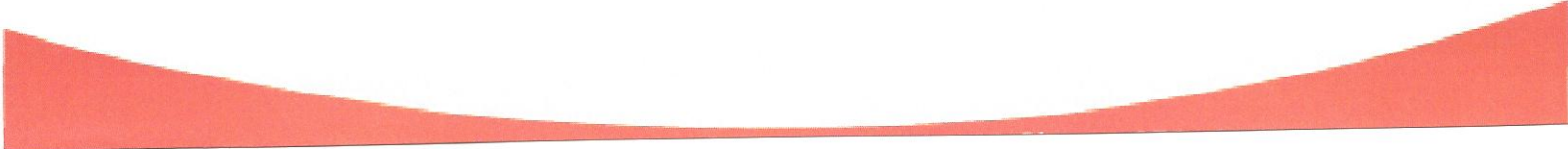


Her work is amazing it is art “eye candy”.

Dr. Joan M.E. Gaither, an accomplished Fiber Artist, created several quilts that were exhibited at the Banneker-Douglass Museum, Baltimore Maryland, employing a technique she refers to as “quilting from the soul.” She describes this as approaching quilt making as one would in creating a multi-layered collage, combining a variety of vibrant fabrics, images, geometric forms, symbols, and text. This technique allows the experienced as well as the novice quilter to use current technology and mixed media, along with traditional materials, to create pieces with remarkable energy, reflecting a sense of place, community family, history and identity.

Dr. Gaither is a retired Art Educator, who volunteers in her community with seniors developing quilts and training educators in the Baltimore school system. During the past two years while creating the **MARVITASTIC MEMORIES NBTf 2011 QUILT**, Dr. Gaither worked on 40 different quilt projects. Amazing!!

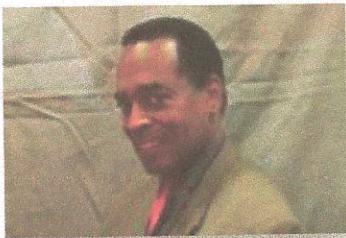
Dr. Gaither also created the noteworthy quilt known as the “Journey to the White House”. This quilt captures the historic political rise of Chicago native and now Unite States of America President, Barack Obama. Her artistic gift as a fiber artist helps to preserve American history. Like the history of so many countries, her art is just as significant as any national monument or flag.





To celebrate the MARVTASTIC MEMORIES OF THE NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL CIRCA 1989-2011, HERMAN LEVERN JONES MANAGEMENT GROUP will host a reception Wednesday August 3, 2011, 12noon – 3pm, at the Womble Carlyle Gallery, Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts. The value of the quilt has been appraised for a staggering \$250,000.00 (two hundred fifty thousand dollars). This fine piece of American History will be available for tour in your local community.

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THE QUILT

