

Roots at 40: Reflections and Remembrances

Call for Conference Papers

Conference Dates: October 6-7, 2017

Conference Location: Goodwin College, East Hartford, CT

Proposal Submission Deadline: November 1, 2016

In the final week of January, 1977, the ABC miniseries *Roots* became the most-watched television program of all time. To the surprise of the show's producers, *Roots* became not only a ratings windfall, but a cultural phenomenon, articulating an African-American counter-narrative of American history, provoking a dialogue about the legacy of enslavement, and presenting African-American characters with a dignity and integrity that differed sharply from the caricatured representations common to television up to that time. In many ways, the response to the show by the media and the general public constitutes the first of many "conversations about race" that have punctuated the Post-Civil Rights era. On October 6 and 7 of 2017, Goodwin College will host a special conference to mark the 40th anniversary of the original broadcast of *Roots*. Goodwin College houses a significant repository of Alex Haley's writings, and it is committed to promoting dialogue about social justice and opportunity for all. We welcome 250-word proposals for conference presentations focused on any aspect of the miniseries, its impact, and its legacy. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Media representations of slavery and African-Americans over the last half-century,
- The sociological and educational impacts of intergenerational trauma,
- Re-viewing *Roots* within the context of contemporary concerns such as the epidemic of mass-incarceration, the cultural heritage of the Civil War, the Black Lives Matter campaign, etc.,
- The power of television as both an agent of change and as upholder of the status quo,
- Generic interactions between oral history and novelistic fiction, and between historical iconography and televised melodrama,
- The history of attempts to have a public "conversation about race" and their ambiguous outcomes,
- Genealogy, naming, and African-American identity,
- Approaches to teaching the novel and the miniseries.

In addition to scholarly contributions, we also welcome artwork, creative writing, personal narratives, and multimedia reflections on *Roots* for inclusion in the conference program.

Why Submit Your Presentation? More exposure for your work! Presentations are searchable through Google, and you will receive reports showing how many people have downloaded your presentation. You can also apply a *Creative Commons License* to your presentation, which controls how people can use your presentation materials.

What can you upload? PowerPoint Slides, papers, handouts, video, audio, and any other documents you are planning on using during your presentation.

Need Help? Contact Cynthia Hunt at chunt@goodwin.edu or digitalcommons@goodwin.edu If you are having trouble submitting your presentation materials, email them to Cynthia and she will upload them for you!

For questions about the Conference please contact Dr. Randy Laist at rlaist@goodwin.edu or Amanda Daddona at adaddona@goodwin.edu