PRESENTS

‘Break My Soul’:
Why Black Stories, Black Voices,
and Black Writing Matter

FEATURING

Kevin Powell
Renowned Writer, Poet, Journalist, and Activist
2022-2023 Toni Morrison Writing Program Writer-in-Residence

Wednesday, September 28, 2022 | 10 A.M.
Willie A. Tempton, Sr. Memorial Student Center
Opal Johnson Smith Auditorium
Livestream: youtube.com/pvamu
In an effort to reclaim our humanity, let us find new motivation for living by opening our minds to broader concepts of spirituality.

Kevin Powell

About the Toni Morrison Writing Program

Thinking deeply, dreaming imaginatively, reading critically, reflecting incisively and then writing compellingly is the very essence of what it means to give power to voice. Prairie View A&M University aims to educate its students to become change leaders in an increasingly more diverse, globally interconnected world. Students will be inspired to uncover their talents and hone their skills as they learn to craft the unique characteristics of various literary genres, comprehend the expectations of the publishing process and benefit from the resources available in a competitive yet supportive writers’ world.

Led by Provost Emerita and Professor E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith and organizationally housed in the Marvin D. and June Samuel Brailsford College of Arts and Sciences, the Program features an annual Writer-in-Residence who will offer public readings, master classes, lectures, class visitations, and critiques of students’ works. There will come summer writing workshops, informal book discussions with prominent authors, a scholarship program, contests, and, eventually, a full curriculum supporting a degree program in creative writing and other linguistic expression. In keeping with the University’s land grant mission, the University will include an outreach component wherein area high schools and elementary schools will become Toni Morrison Writing Program partners. A most prominent partner to the Toni Morrison Writing Program is the Ruth J. Simmons Center for Race and Justice, thus fostering exploration of social justice from the perspective of literature, public policy, entertainment, environmental science, athletics, health and other areas.

The Toni Morrison Writing Program was made possible via a substantial gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott in early 2021. Scott was a student of Morrison during her time at Princeton and attributes much of her development as an author to Morrison’s mentorship.
Program

MUSICAL PRELUDE
Blues, Jazz, Hip Hop: The Refrain
Orok Orrok
Executive Director, Housing and Residential Life
Prairie View A&M University

WELCOME
Taverlyn M. Shepard and Caleb Leeper, Presiders
Miss and Mr. Prairie View A&M University, 2022-2023

OPENING REMARKS
E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith
Provost Emerita and Professor
Director, Toni Morrison Writing Program
Prairie View A&M University

INTRODUCTION OF THE 2022-2023
TONI MORRISON WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE
Nile Howard
Vice President, Student Government Association, 2022-2023

PUBLIC ADDRESS
Kevin Powell
Renowned Writer, Poet, Journalist, and Activist
2022-2023 Toni Morrison Writing Program Writer-in-Residence

‘BREAK MY SOUL’: WHY BLACK STORIES, BLACK VOICES,
AND BLACK WRITERS MATTER

A SOULFUL CONVERSATION WITH KEVIN POWELL
Fred A. Bonner II
Professor and Endowed Chair in Educational Leadership and Counseling
Founding Executive Director and Chief Scientist of the
Minority Achievement, Creativity and High-Ability (MACH-III) Center
Prairie View A&M University

CLOSING REMARKS
Dorie Gilbert
Professor and Dean
Marvin D. and June Samuel Brailsford College of Arts & Sciences
Prairie View A&M University

Kevin Powell

Kevin Powell is one of the most celebrated political, cultural, literary, and hip-hop voices in America. A native of Jersey City, Powell was raised by a single mother in a community stricken with extreme poverty and violence. His life transformed after studying at Rutgers University in New Brunswick thanks to the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund, a program created during the Civil Rights Movement to benefit poor youth. Today, he has lectured, worked, and traveled in all 50 American states and five of the world’s seven continents.


Powell’s forthcoming books include The Kevin Powell Reader, a collection of his writings, interviews, and speeches covering 30 years of his work, and a long-awaited biography of Tupac Shakur.

Powell is directing, writing, and producing his first documentary film, “When We Free The World,” about healthy manhood versus toxic manhood, about fathers and sons. He is also the playwright of an upcoming stage play based on his newest poetry collection, titled “Grocery Shopping with My Mother.”

As a civil and human rights activist, Powell is starting an advocacy organization focused on voter education, voter empowerment, and bringing people together for humanitarian causes. In 2008 and 2010, Powell ran for Congress in his adopted hometown of New York City.

Powell is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. He is a long-time resident of Brooklyn, New York.
Kevin Powell’s Recommended Reading List

BOOKS

“The Education of Kevin Powell: A Boy’s Journey into Manhood”
Kevin’s autobiography, which will be available to students during his residency

“Grocery Shopping with My Mother”
Kevin’s 15th book and third poetry collection, which will be available for students during his residency

POETRY

“For Cicely Tyson”
via Good Morning America/ABC News

“Tupac and Biggie”
via Vibe

“Dear Kobe”
via Vibe

“Son2Mother”
via Brooklyn Rail

“For Miguel Algarin”
via A Gathering of Tribes

“we them people”
via One Billion Rising

ARTICLES

“The Power of Stacey Abrams”
via The Washington Post Magazine

“Michael B. Jordan on Black Panther: We’re giving black people Power”
via British GQ

“Heaven Hell Dave Chappelle”
via Esquire

“In Close Quarters, a Mother of 6 Battles Coronavirus”
via The New York Times

“Kerry Washington: Woman on Top”
via Ebony

BLOGS/ESSAYS

“To Be Young, Gifted, and Chadwick Boseman”
via CNN

“To John Lewis, with love”
via The Guardian

“Between Russell Simmons and The World and Oprah”
via Utne Reader

“A Letter From Father to Child”
via The New York Times

“The Emancipation of Kendrick Lamar”
via Complex
Planning Committee

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