

NEWS RELEASE



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Author Yvonne Shorter Brown comes to Laurier amid historic UN year

WATERLOO – Author, educator and social justice advocate Yvonne Shorter Brown will be leading a public lecture and reading from her critically acclaimed memoir *Dead Woman Pickney: A Memoir of Childhood in Jamaica* Oct. 31 at 4 p.m. in Laurier’s Senate and Board Chamber.

Brown’s visit – organized by the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education – comes as the United Nations marks 2011 as the International Year for People of African Descent.

“This is an opportunity to honour the aims of that UN initiative and to open up a dialogue about how relevant her story is today,” said Carol Duncan, co-organizer of the event and an associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies.

Dead Woman Pickney (WLU Press 2010) is a coming-of-age story that takes place in Jamaica from 1943 to 1965. The author’s personal experiences parallel the political stages of Jamaica’s transition from the richest Crown colony of Great Britain to an independent nation within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

“Dr. Brown is able to skillfully move between autobiographical narrative and historical context in a way that is very engaging,” said Duncan.

In addition to the public lecture and reading, Brown will attend Duncan’s class, Religion and Culture of the African Diaspora, Nov. 1. She will also facilitate a workshop on autobiography, narrative and memoir for faculty members and graduate students in the Faculty of Education and in graduate programs associated with the Faculty of Arts.

“One’s autobiography is what so often dictates how we view the world and can influence research, but it often goes unanalyzed,” said Kristiina Montero, co-organizer of the event and an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education. “Brown will provide a broader lens view of education.”

Brown is a retired public school teacher, university lecturer, researcher, writer, and social justice advocate. She recently completed a post-doctoral fellowship on “Slavery, Memory, Citizenship” at the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migration of African Peoples. Her research, writing and workshops deal with how the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade and plantation slavery on the continent of Africa and in its Diasporas are remembered in various struggles for citizenship.

The Oct. 31 event is free and open to the public. The Department of Religion and Culture, the Faculty of Education Dean Colleen Willard-Holt, the Office of the Dean of Arts and the Diversity Office are sponsoring this event.