



For Immediate Release

Contact: Arleta Little
arleta@givens.org
952-831-2555

**THE GIVENS FOUNDATION FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE
ANNOUNCES
THE KICK-OFF OF THE BIG READ TWIN CITIES**

**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS**



*The Twin Cities will come together to
read and celebrate Ernest Gaines's novel "A Lesson Before Dying"*

Minneapolis, MN—Sept 24, 2008—The Givens Foundation for African American Literature will launch its Big Read celebration of Ernest Gaines's poignant novel "A Lesson Before Dying" in a dynamic dialogue with author Ernest Gaines on **October 14th at 6:00pm** at **Minneapolis Central Library, Pohlad Hall, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis**. The Big Read Twin Cities is presented in partnership with Hennepin County Library and the African American Read-In.

The kick-off event will feature a conversation exploring "A Lesson Before Dying" with author Ernest Gaines facilitated by local African American scholars John Wright, Alex Pate, and Irma McClaurin. The event will also include dramatic readings from the novel by local African American literary artists.

"As the only organization in the Twin Cities exclusively dedicated to advancing and celebrating black literature and writers, we are very excited to celebrate Ernest Gaines's novel as part of Big Read this year," says Archie Givens, President of the Givens Foundation for African American Literature.

The Twin Cities is one of 189 communities nationwide participating in The Big Read from September 2008- May 2009. Locally, the Givens Foundation will organize African American writers, storytellers, spoken word artists, and scholars to engage the community through literary arts residencies at Twin Cities schools, book groups and film viewings at libraries and local theaters, as well as events celebrating the novel at schools, libraries, and community sites throughout the Twin Cities metro area. Events will be announced via email and at www.givens.org throughout the year. Please grab the book and join us!

For more information on the Big Read Twin Cities kick off event, please contact Arleta Little, 952-831-2555, arleta@givens.org.

For more than 20 years, the Givens Foundation for African American Literature has been the only organization in the Twin Cities exclusively dedicated to advancing and celebrating black literature and writers. Our literary arts residencies, NOMMO African American Author Series, and programs for writers illuminate the cultural resources and creative imagination found within African American literature to enrich cultural understanding for diverse audiences of all ages. ***Learn more at www.givens.org***

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The NEA presents The Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest. Support for The Big Read is provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. ***Learn more at www.neabigread.org***

