

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**RENOWNED AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER GORDON PARKS IS GUEST OF HONOR AT
THE 29TH ANNUAL NEWARK BLACK FILM FESTIVAL
ON JULY 9, 2003**

**Screening of *Half Past Autumn: The Life and Works of Gordon Parks*, is Film Documentary
Feature at Tribute in The Newark Museum**

**Chester Higgins, Jr., Famed Staff Photographer at *The New York Times* and Author, Serves As
Guest Speaker in Honor of Parks**

NEWARK, NJ – Legendary photographer Gordon Parks, whose artistic contributions span a half-century, is Guest of Honor at The 29th Annual Newark Black Film Festival on Wednesday, July 9, 2003, 7:30 p.m., at The Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street, Newark, NJ. Highlighting the tribute to Parks is the screening of the documentary film about his life, *Half Past Autumn: The Life and Works of Gordon Parks*. One of the most prolific and diverse documentaries today, the film celebrates the half-century during which Parks has brilliantly documented the many issues in the American experience. The tribute is free of charge and open to the public.

The tribute to Parks continues to advance The Newark Black Film Festival's progressive approach to screening thought-provoking movie fare, leading to a lively discussion among community residents and the artists who write, produce and direct the contents.

The 2003 festival season is the third consecutive year in which Fleet has been the Official Sponsor. "Through the annual Newark Black Film Festival, The Newark Museum advances our understanding of different cultures and different beliefs, while providing African American filmmakers, writers, and actors a prominent showcase for their creative work product," said

Bruce Wheeler, president of Fleet New Jersey. “This is an ideal opportunity for Fleet to reaffirm our corporate commitment to the arts community and to diversity, and all of us at Fleet are proud to be part of that endeavor.”

In addition to sponsoring this year’s festival, Fleet is giving away ten \$50 U. S. Savings bonds at the festival’s Youth screenings. Recipients of the bonds are determined through a raffle and winners are announced at the end of each day’s program.

Craig Rice, Executive Director of the Minnesota Film and Television Board, is the producer and director of *Half Past Autumn: The Life and Works of Gordon Parks*. Rice has produced and directed other feature films, including *Graffiti Bridge*, and the ABC television documentary, *We Teach Our Children*, about desegregation in Los Angeles schools.

The photography of Special Guest Speaker Chester Higgins, Jr. can be found within the pages of *The New York Times*, where he has been a staff photographer since 1975. Higgins brings significant artistic balance to the Parks tribute. Describing himself as a “cultural anthropologist with a camera,” Higgins has more than 30 years experience as a professional at his craft.

The recipient of grants from the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and others, Higgins’ photographs have appeared in *Look, Life, Time, Newsweek, Fortune, Ebony, Essence and Black Enterprise*. A graduate of Tuskegee University, Higgins has produced seminal works in the photo-essay form such as his book collections *Black Woman* and *Drums of Life*. His most recent works include *Feeling the Spirit: Searching the World for the People of Africa*, and *Elder Grace: The Nobility of Aging*.

A comprehensive retrospective of Parks's works, including his photographs, books, music, film and poetry, *Half Past Autumn: The Art of Gordon Parks*, is on exhibition at The Newark Museum until August 31, 2003.

Adult Cinema Schedule

July 16 – 7:00 p.m.

The Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street

Film: **The Pawnbroker** (1965)

Special Guest Speaker: Brock Peters, Actor

July 23 – 7:00 p.m.

Newark Screens on Springfield Ave., 360-394 Springfield Ave.

Film: **Karmen Gei** (2001)

Special Guest Speaker: Professor Zain Abdullah, American and African Studies, Sociology and Anthropology at Rutgers University (Newark Campus)

July 30 – 7:00 p.m.

Newark Symphony Hall

Film: **Remember The Titans** (2000)

Special Guest Speaker: Coach Herman Boone, Motivational Speaker

Youth Cinema Schedule

July 9 – 1:00 p.m.

The Newark Museum

Films: **Jazztime**

Ella Fitzgerald: The Tale of a Vocal Virtuosa

Duke Ellington

July 14 – 10:30 a.m.

Newark Public Library

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July 16 – 1:00 p.m.

The Newark Museum

Films: **Who's in Rabbit's House?**

Follow the Drinking Gourd: The Story of the Underground Railroad

African Story Magic

July 21 – 10:30 a.m.

Newark Public Library

Film: **Children’s Stories From Africa, Volumes I & IV**

July 23 – 1:00 p.m.

Newark Screens on Springfield Ave.

Film: **Kirikou and The Sorceress**

July 28 – 10:30 a.m.

Newark Public Library

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July 30 – 1:00 p.m.

The Newark Museum

Films: **Dreadlocks and the Three Bears**

Joshua’s Masai Mask

Champagne & The Talking Eggs

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ABOUT THE NEWARK MUSEUM

The Newark Museum, located at 49 Washington Street in the Downtown/Arts District of Newark, NJ, is open Wednesdays through Sundays, from 12:00 noon – 5:00 p.m. Suggested admission: Adults, \$5.00, children, seniors and students, \$2.00. Members are admitted free. The Museum Café is open Wednesday through Sunday, 12:00 Noon – 3:30 p.m. Parking is available for a nominal fee in the adjacent lot. For general information, call 973-596-6550 or visit our web site, www.newarkmuseum.org. The Newark Museum, a not-for-profit museum of art, science and education, receives operating support from the City of Newark, the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State and corporate, foundation and individual donors. Members and other contributors provide funds for acquisitions and activities other than operations.

ABOUT FLEET

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