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THE NEWARK MUSEUM

**Contacts:**

ALLISON MCCARTNEY, THE NEWARK MUSEUM  
(973)596-6638 / [amccartney@newarkmuseum.org](mailto:amccartney@newarkmuseum.org)  
JERRY ENIS, HERBERT GEORGE ASSOCIATES  
(732)446-5400 / [hganj@aol.com](mailto:hganj@aol.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Newark Black Film Festival Presents  
*The Ditchdigger's Daughters***

***Best-Selling Author and Family Member to Speak Following Film***

***NBFF Scheduled:***

***July 23 at 7:00 p.m. at NJ Institute of Technology, Newark, NJ;  
July 24 at 6:00 p.m. at The New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ;  
July 25 at 7:00 p.m. at Asbury Park High School, Asbury Park, NJ***

**Newark, NJ (July 14, 2008)** – The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Newark Black Film Festival (NBFF), produced by The Newark Museum and sponsored by Bank of America, will screen *The Ditchdigger's Daughters*, a moving account of a father's dreams for his family brought to fruition through perseverance, hard work and love. The film will be shown in Newark, Asbury Park and Trenton in conjunction with a presentation entitled "The sky is the limit – if you want it!" by family member and national best-selling author Yvonne S. Thornton, M.D.

Dr. Thornton is a double—Board certified specialist in obstetrics, gynecology and maternal-fetal medicine and is Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology at Cornell University Medical College. Her other books include *Woman to Woman* and *Primary Care for the Obstetrician and Gynecologist*.

*The Ditchdigger's Daughters* schedule for the three NBFF screenings is: Newark, The NJ Institute of Technology, Wednesday, July 23, 7:00 p.m.; Trenton, The New Jersey State Museum, Thursday, July 24, 6:00 p.m.; and Asbury Park, Asbury Park High School, Friday, July 25, 7:00 p.m.

Directed by Johnny E. Jensen, the film takes place in 1983 at the childhood home of the Thornton sisters in Long Branch, New Jersey. Sitting at the dining room table, the sisters recount memories growing up, especially paying tribute to their father, Donald Thornton, who instilled in them the values of love, passion and discipline to achieve anything they set out to do. Growing up poor, Donald Thornton taught valuable lessons that would carry his daughters to successful professional careers.

Academic excellence and the study of musical instruments were also mandated in the Thornton household. After diligent practice and study, their hard work soon paid off. The daughters played

at the Apollo in Harlem and their semi-professional career helped to pay their way through college. The six sisters became successful career women - two physicians, a dentist, a lawyer, a nurse and a court stenographer. Throughout their lives, Donald Thornton was there, supporting each daughter's aspirations.

The all star cast includes Monica Calhoun, Rosalyn Coleman, Victoria Dillard, Kimberly Elise, Erika Heard, Dule Hill, Carl Lumbly, Lynne Moody, Shelley Robertson, and Denice J. Sealy.

Funding by Bank of America expanded the reach of the NBFF, the oldest black film festival in the country, to Trenton, Asbury Park and Camden, where the festival will be screened in the fall. Co-presenters include New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT); Newark Public Library; Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience, Rutgers, The State University (Newark Campus); Newark Screens on Springfield Ave. in Newark; Monmouth County Arts Council – Asbury Park High School; Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts, and the New Jersey State Museum in partnership with the New Jersey Department of State.

Since its introduction in 1974, NBFF has provided a forum for hundreds of emerging writers, directors, producers, performers and movie fans. The goal of the Festival is to present programs that reflect the full diversity of the black experience both past and present, encompassing a wide range of forums and formulas, from documentary to the avant-garde. In the past 33 years, the Newark Black Film Festival has screened 650 films to an audience of nearly 147,000 adults and children.

All screenings are FREE TO THE PUBLIC. Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the theater is filled to capacity, additional seating will not be provided. Group seating is limited to two groups of 25 for each screening. To reserve group seating in Newark, call 973-596-6550. Group seating reservations will only be held until 6:40 p.m.

**Photographs are available upon request.**

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#### **About Bank of America**

Bank of America is one of the world's largest financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small and middle market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk-management products and services. The company provides unmatched convenience in the United States, serving more than 59 million consumer and small business relationships with more than 6,100 retail banking offices, nearly 19,000 ATMs and award-winning online banking with nearly 24 million active users. Bank of America is the No. 1 overall Small Business Administration (SBA) lender in the United States and the No. 1 SBA lender to minority-owned small businesses. The company serves clients in 175 countries and has relationships with 99 percent of the U.S. Fortune 500 companies and 83 percent of the Global Fortune 500. Bank of America Corporation stock (NYSE: BAC) is listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

#### **ABOUT THE NEWARK MUSEUM**

The Newark Museum is located at 49 Washington Street in the Downtown/Arts District of Newark, New Jersey, just 3 blocks from NJPAC and 10 miles west of New York City. The Museum is open all year round: Wednesdays through Fridays, from Noon - 5:00 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., October 1 - June 30; and Saturdays and Sundays, from Noon - 5:00 p.m., July 1 - September 30. Suggested Museum admission: Adults, \$9.00; Children, Seniors and Students with valid I.D., \$6.00. Members are admitted free. The Museum Café is open for lunches Wednesday through Sunday. Convenient parking is available for a fee. For general information, call 973-596-6550 or visit our web site, <http://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—a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey Cultural Trust, the Prudential Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, the Wallace Foundation, and other corporations, foundations and individuals. Funds for acquisitions and activities other than operations are provided by members and other contributors.

**The Newark Museum is just a few steps from the NJTransit Light Rail Washington Park Station. Direct connection with the Light Rail at the Broad Street Station and through Penn Station makes the Museum a convenient ride from all points in the region.**

**About the New Jersey State Museum**

The New Jersey State Museum was established in 1895 - one of the nation's first state museums founded with an educational mission. Today, that mission comes alive across four distinct subject areas – Archaeology/Ethnology, Cultural History, Fine Art and Natural History – offering a dynamic experience of "four museums in one" and a galaxy of activities for every member of the family. Treasures are exhibited thematically across an expansive, three-building campus that includes the newly renovated four-level main building, a 384-seat auditorium, and a 150-seat planetarium, which is undergoing renovations. Together, the State of New Jersey and the foundations, corporations and citizens of the state are transforming the "People's Museum" into a premiere location for cultural exchange and education. For more information go to [www.newjerseystatemuseum.org](http://www.newjerseystatemuseum.org).

**About Monmouth County Arts Council**

The Monmouth County Arts Council, a private, nonprofit agency, is dedicated to enriching the cultural life of the county by providing resources to support, inspire and foster the growth and development of the arts. MCAC is made up of hundreds of artists, patrons of the arts, businesses, and 75 arts and community groups which produce theatre, visual art, music film, storytelling, writing and dance. MCAC publishes the only arts magazine in the country, *State of the Art*. A calendar of arts events and programs is available on [www.monmouthartscouncil.org](http://www.monmouthartscouncil.org) with links to county arts organizations.

**About Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts**

Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts (RCCA) is South New Jersey's premier performing arts, visual arts and arts education institution and has been designated a "Major Arts Organization of New Jersey" by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State. RCCA's mission is to provide performances, exhibitions, education programs, and community projects, that inspire a full appreciation and enjoyment of the arts, create meaningful opportunities to participate in the arts, advance the central role of the arts in preK-12 education, and increase awareness of the arts as essential to cultural, economic, and community vitality. Located on the Camden waterfront, the RCCA venues include the Walter K. Gordon Theater, Stedman Gallery, and Black Box Studio.