Natchez (MS) Welcomes the World to Celebrate the Life and Works of Richard Wright Through a New Program Offered by Elderhostel

The Natchez Library & Cinema Celebration, February 20-24, 2008, is about the life and works of Richard Wright, famed African American writer of Native Son and other books. Elderhostel, in association with Copiah-Lincoln Community College, takes you on a five-day educational adventure and provides front row seats to experience lectures, workshops, live performances, food, and more celebrating an acclaimed black author.

Natchez, Miss. (PRWEB) January 24, 2008 -- The life and works of Richard Wright, a famed native son of Natchez, Miss., will be celebrated on the centennial of his birth at the 19th annual Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration Feb. 20-24, 2008. Elderhostel, in association with Copiah-Lincoln Community College, takes you on a five-day educational adventure and provides you with a front-row seat to experience lectures, workshops, a live performance, food and friends dedicated to the memory of one of the most acclaimed black authors of all time. [Following this February event in Natchez, Elderhostel has four additional trips planned to Natchez in April, May, September and October, 2008.]

Elderhostel is a not-for-profit organization with more than 30 years of experience providing exceptional learning opportunities through educational travel programs throughout the world for adults at remarkable values. Elderhostel's newest programming initiative is Road Scholar--designed for a new generation of independent educational travelers. "As Elderhostel and Road Scholar develop experiences that are culturally significant to the African American community, the Natchez program is exciting for anyone interested in American history, while highlighting the works of an African American icon," said James Moses, president and CEO of Elderhostel.

"Richard Wright, the South, and the World: A Centennial Celebration" is the conference theme of the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration. Wright wrote such blockbusters as Native Son, Black Boy, Lawd Today, White Man Listen and Uncle Tom's Children, which has been chosen as Book of the Year for the Mississippi Reads Project. He was born in 1908 near Natchez and died in 1960 in Paris, France. "He will come alive during the conference; his love of family, books, music, food, drama, photography, film and acting will be discussed, along with scholarly criticism of his works," said Carolyn Vance Smith of Copiah-Lincoln Community College, founder and co-chairman of the event. His daughter, Julia Wright, of Paris, will be the keynote speaker, and dozens of family members from around the world are planning to attend.

The first "Richard Wright Ramble," a docent-led exploration of sites associated with Richard Wright and the Wright family, is being organized by Charles Wright of Natchez, a cousin who is family historian. The exploration includes Natchez-area home places, churches, schools, cemeteries and locations featured in Wright's novels. In addition to programs are films, documentaries, a dramatic version of Native Son by the Natchez Little Theatre, meals featuring Wright's favorite foods, writing workshops, exhibits and the option to participate in a gala benefit reception and dinner at the historic mansion, The Towers.

The conference is highlighted with the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award, which is being presented to three outstanding writers with southern roots. The awards ceremony, taking place at 5:30 p.m., Feb. 23, honors
Lerone Bennett, Jr., Chicago, Ill., editor of Ebony and author of Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America 1619-1966, Great Moments in Black History and more than a dozen other books; Brooks Haxton, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y., an accomplished poet and author of Uproar: Antiphonies to Psalms and many other volumes of poetry. The Horton Foote Award for Special Achievement in Screenwriting, named in honor of the Pulitzer Prize-winning screenwriter, will be presented to another Pulitzer Prize-winner, Alfred Uhry, a Georgia native now of New York, N.Y. Uhry is a noted playwright, lyricist and screenwriter of Driving Miss Daisy, The Robber Bridegroom, Mystic Pizza, and Rich in Love. Driving Miss Daisy will be screened following the awards ceremony, with a discussion session led by Uhry and Dixon McDowell, professor of film at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Elderhostel has introduced over 4 million people to an extraordinary range of program topics in locations in across the U.S. and worldwide, including International & North America --worldwide educational journeys; Snapshots--three to four day adventures; Days of Discovery -- one-day discovery programs in metro areas across the U.S.; Adventures Afloat -- explorations of the world shipboard; and much more.

For more information about Elderhostel and its programs, please contact www.elderhostel.org. For more information about the specifics of the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration, please visit www.colin.edu/nlcc/.

More About Elderhostel
Elderhostel, founded in 1975, is the world's largest not-for-profit educational travel organization for older adults. Approximately 160,000 people enroll in Elderhostel's 8,000 programs annually. Elderhostel provides exceptional learning adventures throughout the United States and Canada and in more than 90 countries around the world. Expert instructors and experienced group leaders create extraordinary experiences by sharing stimulating information, leading fascinating field trips and providing meaningful cultural excursions. In 2004, Elderhostel launched Road Scholar to meet the needs of a new generation of independent educational travelers. For more information, please visit www.elderhostel.org or www.roadscholar.org.

###
Contact Information
BUNNIE JACKSON-RANSOM
First Class, Inc.
http://www.elderhostel.org
404-505-8188

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.