

# South Carolina State University

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For Immediate Release

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Clarendon County Petitioners



Isaac "Ike" W. Williams  
(1945-2008)



SC State Student Art

## **‘Evening of Civil Rights and Answers to Racism’, a tribute to Isaac “Ike” Williams and the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual SC State Student Art Exhibition**

**Orangeburg, S.C.** – SC State’s I.P. Stanback Museum and Planetarium (The Stanback) and department of Visual and Performing Arts will present an *‘Evening of Civil Rights and Answers to Racism’*, a tribute to Isaac “Ike” Williams and the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Art Exhibition.

On Thursday, April 22, 2010 at 5:30 p.m., SC State’s Henderson Davis Players will perform the play “The People of Clarendon County,” in the Dr. Barbara A. Vaughan Recital Hall in the Fine Arts Center. The play written by actor, director, poet, playwright, writer, and social activist, Ozzie Davis, will be directed by Frank Mundy, with SC State’s Chorus directed by Richard Beckford accompanying.

Following the performance, there will be a discussion of teaching methods to end racism by journalist, aesthetic realism associate and long-time columnist for **SC Black News**, Alice Bernstein; anthropologist, Dr. Arnold Perey and educator, Monique Michael.

The evening will culminate with the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Art Exhibition and Award presentations, posthumous tribute to SC State’s own Civil Rights activist Isaac “Ike” W. Williams, recognition of unsung civil rights heroes, book signings, and a reception.

The discovery of Davis’ unpublished 1955 civil rights play by Bernstein — 50 years after its only performance — astonished and delighted him. He enthusiastically supported her desire to bring it to print with essays on the cause and answer to racism explained by Aesthetic Realism, the philosophy founded by Eli Siegel. The book, *‘The People of Clarendon County’* published by Third World Press, sheds new light on the heroic fight by black South Carolinians for equal education, and highlights their crucial role in the

landmark desegregation ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*. Bernstein will tell of conversations with Davis, of how he came to write the play and his discovery of a family connection to Clarendon County history.

In October 2009, the play and discussion received a standing ovation in the Congressional Auditorium of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC with featured guests Majority Whip James Clyburn and other members of Congress. "I want to thank Alice for making sure their sacrifices will be in a form that generations will forever understand and recognize," Congressman Clyburn said following the performance. His office provided historical photographs of Clarendon County petitioners for Bernstein's book.

Bernstein, Perey, and Michael, will discuss the solution to racism and the immense success of the Aesthetic Realism Teaching Method in bringing out every child's true intelligence and desire to be kind. Michael's exciting interactive science lesson on diversity will illustrate what Ruby Dee, award-winning actor and wife of Davis, described as, "the success of the Aesthetic Realism Teaching Method in enabling children to learn every subject, and ending prejudice in the classroom."

Following the discussion, events will commence at the Stanback. The department of Visual and Performing Arts will present the multifaceted exhibition of student work during the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Art Exhibition. The winners will be announced and awarded.

Also, Bernstein, friend of Isaac "Ike" W. Williams (1945-2008), will present a video tribute to his life-long activism for civil rights. The tribute will chronicle his life, as a student at then - SC State College (SCSC) through his work as chief liaison for Congressman James E. Clyburn, and will also pay tribute to the unsung heroes of civil rights.

Lastly, during the reception, on display will be videos honoring the Clarendon County story, photographs, music and book signings by Bernstein and photographer Cecil Williams.

This event is a nationwide project of the not-for-profit Alliance of Ethics & Art, presented free to audiences of all ages.

For additional information about the I.P. Stanback Museum and Planetarium contact Ellen Zisholtz, Director at (803)536-7174 or Ingrid Owens, Program Manager at (803)536-8329.

*Renovated and reopened on February 23, 2007 after being closed for several years, the I.P. Stanback Museum and Planetarium located on the campus of [South Carolina State University](#) in [Orangeburg, S.C.](#), is an embodiment of SC State University's commitment to community service enhancing the appreciation of Civil Rights, Arts, Science and Humanities in a single facility. The Stanback is of significant national importance as the only facility of its kind, an interdisciplinary Museum and Planetarium, at any Historically Black College and University and one of few in the country.*

*Founded in 1896 as a land grant institution with a mission of providing service to the citizens of the state, [South Carolina State University](#) has evolved from a small teachers' college into a major University center of learning and research. Located in [Orangeburg, S.C.](#), with a student population of some 4,500, South Carolina State offers more than 50 different fields of study on the undergraduate and graduate levels. South Carolina State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is a member of the Council of Graduate Schools.*