



NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
June 20, 2016**

TURNING 10!

Renowned Leimert Park Village Book Fair Gears Up For 10th Anniversary Celebration With Headliners, Crowd Pleasers and Fan Favorites

LOS ANGELES – “Voted One of LA’s Five Best Annual Book Festivals,” the renowned Leimert Park Village Book Fair (LPVBF) invites those who love reading, literature, learning and fun to the 10th anniversary celebration on Saturday, August 20, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the grounds of the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza (BHCP), located at 3650 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in LA. This year, the book fair will be held outdoors, and luckily, it rarely rains in Southern California! Thousands are expected to flock once again to this family-oriented festival held in the heart of Leimert Park, the epicenter of the Los Angeles area African American arts, intellectual and literary scene.

LPVBF will celebrate its 10th anniversary with an exciting and eclectic mix of authors, scholars, poets, television personalities, and celebrities. The book fair will present a line up of headliners and crowd pleasers, fan favorites of voracious readers and of book clubs around the country. This tribute to reading and literature will be punctuated by music, laughter, intellectual engagement and celebrity authors, signing their impressive works of literature.

"This year marks our 10th anniversary," said Cynthia Exum, founder and executive director of the LPVBF. "We wanted to step things up a notch to commemorate this milestone; so, we are hosting city-wide special events, called 'BookEnd' events with our community partners." She added, "There will be concerts, film screenings, celebrity readings, panel discussions, reading parties and more to help us celebrate our theme of 'Turning 10!'" In 2007, with a vision of staging a world-class book fair in Leimert Park, Exum invested her own money, and that of a few friends, into what has become one of the nation's best gathering of authors, scholars, entertainers and educators.

Her commitment to the book fair was acknowledged when she received public support from the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, LA Department of Cultural Affairs as well as sponsors, community organizations and enthused merchants in Leimert Park Village, including Eso Won Books, one of LA's premier African American-owned bookstores. With the support of these partners and supporters, she built a high-quality cultural event, and the people came!

Now considered one of the premier literary events on the West Coast, the LPVFB continues to be free to the public, and expected to draw more than 10,000 people, with over 150 authors, writers, storytellers, poets, spoken word performers, vendors and exhibitors. Enjoying unprecedented growth, the book fair was re-located in 2013 to the spacious Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza -- a beautiful historic venue, located in the Leimert Park area.

For Exum, the impetus for the start of the book fair began as a tribute to her late grandmother who read the Bible daily and kept stacks of National Geographic magazines around the house – as well as to her late sister who regularly received books from Exum, while serving time at the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF). "Having books in the home inspired a love of reading for me," explained Exum. "As a child, by flipping the pages of a book, I could go anywhere in the world, and dream the dreams of the person I wanted to be."

Exum has taken the book fair on the road this year, hosting two community reading programs in collaboration with the Los Angeles Public Library (the Washington Irving Branch), the National Endowment for the Arts, and the LA Department of Cultural Affairs. In memory of her sister, she plans to organize a pop-up book fair at a women's prison to offer inmates not only a lifeline; but, a love of learning through reading. Perhaps, taking a cue from media mogul Oprah Winfrey, Exum eventually wants to expand her book fair and literacy programs internationally to Africa.

Today, the LPVBF has become a much-anticipated cultural tradition in the LA area. "We are pleased to support this pre-eminent literary organization, which hosts some of our greatest scholars, historians, established artists as well as emerging authors, providing a unique platform for them to connect with the community," added Dr. Bernard W. and Shirley Kinsey, chairpersons of the LPVBF. "The event is a beautiful testament that our community loves reading and the literary arts, and we're so proud to be apart of this special celebration."

PAST PARTICIPANTS

In the past nine years, the book fair has hosted a steadfast stellar lineup of authors, poets, celebrity authors, speakers and artists, including Pulitzer Prize winners **Isabel Wilkerson** and **Douglas A. Blackmon**; prominent literary figure **Ishmael Reed**; New York Times best seller **Eric Jerome Dickey**; poet/activist **Nikki Giovanni** and poet/playwright **Sonia Sanchez**; Oscar winner **Louis Gossett Jr.**; along with award-winning actors like **Victoria Rowell** (*The Young and the Restless*); **Hill Harper** (*CSI: NY*); **Todd Bridges** (*Diff'rent Stokes*); **Isaiah Washington** (*Grey's Anatomy*); and reality stars **NeNe Leakes** (*Real Housewives of Atlanta*); writer reality star **Demetria Lucas D'Oyley** (*Blood, Sweat & Heels*) and Award Winning Film Director **Ava DuVernay** (*Selma*) – just to name a few. Also, throughout during its tenure, world-renowned visual artists, such as **Charles Bibbs**, **Michael Massenburg**, **Synthia Saint James** and **Varnette P. Honeywood** have lent their talents to creating official LPVBF posters to commemorate the event. For a complete list of previous celebrity participants, please visit www.leimertparkbookfair.com

ABOUT THE LEIMERT PARK VILLAGE BOOK FAIR

The LPVBF is produced by Exum and Associates in collaboration with the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs; and Capri Capital Partners of Baldwin Hills Crenshaw. Philanthropists and Art Historians Dr. Bernard W. and Shirley Kinsey serve as the book fair's chairpersons, leading the fund-raising efforts and increasing the book fair's brand awareness in the corporate community.

The Kinseys are one of the most admired and respected couples in Los Angeles. They are known for their collection of African-American art, books and manuscripts that document and tell the remarkable story of African Americans triumphs and struggles from 1632 to the present. The Kinsey Collection: "Shared Treasures of Bernard and Shirley Kinsey" has been on a national tour and seen by millions.

Cynthia Exum, an alumnus of the prestigious California State Senate Fellows program, holds a Master of Arts from UCLA's School of Urban Planning and Public Policy. She founded Exum-Casey and Associates, a public affairs and events management firm in 2005. Exum is also the co-author of "Images of America: Leimert Park," with Maty Guiza-Leimert -- the wife of Walter H. Leimert, whose grandfather developed the area in 1927.

The mission of LPVBF is to promote, encourage and advocate literacy, education and the love of reading throughout the Greater Los Angeles areas. LPVBF is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to producing year-round educational programming, as well as to the presentation of events in collaboration with our partners, in addition to the annual summer fair for which the organization is named.

With the backing of partners and supporters, Exum built a high-quality cultural event, and the people came!

WANT TO GO?

Leimert Park Village Book Fair

Saturday, August 20, 2016

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Baldwin Hills Crenshaw (BHC) - courtyard plaza, located at 3650 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in LA

The event is free and open to the public.

The Leimert Park Village Book Fair will feature iconoclast interviews, booksignings, workshops, panel discussions, poetry readings, stage performances, musical entertainment and a variety of activities for the whole family.

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“Voted One of LA’s Five Best Annual Book Festivals”

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