



# POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 29, 2005

Contact: Community Relations  
202-268-4924  
Stamp News Release No. 05-018  
[www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)

## **AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL DIARY TRANSFORMS U. S. POSTAGE STAMPS AND TREASURED MEMORIES INTO FAMILY HEIRLOOM**

WASHINGTON – Expressions of African Americans: A Cultural Diary documents the lives and thoughts of African Americans immortalized on United States postage stamps. The unique collectible consists of a beautifully illustrated binder designed to hold current and future insert cards of African-American stamp issues as well as stationery that can be used to record personal reflections. Customers purchasing this Diary can chronicle their own reflections to create a treasured family heirloom. This \$34.95 keepsake will be introduced at a suburban Washington, DC bookstore March 31.

Roy Betts, Manager, Specialty Communications, U.S. Postal Service, will be the featured speaker at the 7 p.m. ceremony at Karibu Books, Bowie Town Center, 15624 Emerald Way, Bowie, MD.

"Children can create a family heirloom by journaling their parents' or grandparents' reflections of African-Americans depicted on stamps. This will promote stamp collecting for children and their parents and a greater appreciation of the outstanding contributions of African Americans for generations to come," explained David Failor, Director, Stamp Services, U.S. Postal Service. "The Postal Service is pleased to introduce this wonderful product at one of this nation's leading African-American bookstores."

The 10 x 13 inch glossy hardcover Cultural Diary binder features a montage of African-American historical photographs taken from the late 1800s through the 1960s (see image and detailed description in backgrounder to follow) combined with rich textures and decorative elements rendered in warm earth tones of reds, golds and browns.

Also included are insert cards, stamps and mounts for four African-American stamp issues from 2004: Paul Robeson, Wilma Rudolph, James Baldwin and Kwanzaa (see backgrounder for details).

To add to the collection, the \$12.95 Marian Anderson Insert Card and Illustrated Envelope introduced earlier this year will be available for sale at Karibu Books. Additional insert cards will be available later this summer with the issuance of the Arthur Ashe commemorate postage stamp, and the To Form a More Perfect Union commemorate stamp sheet that recognizes ten historic milestones of the civil rights movement.

The 17 interior, 8 ½ x 11 inch wire-bound Diary pages that accommodate up to 34 subjects, is a deep brown and contain slits in all four corners of each to allow insertion of stamp issuance cards and notepad pages. Four insert cards and stamps with mounts are included in the package to begin the collection.

The Cultural Diary pages measure 7 3/8 x 10 inches and contain photographs of the featured stamp subjects, biographical information, timeline and memorable quotations. Cards are executed in tones designed to echo the color palette of the binder. There is also a reproduction of a stamp on each card to designate space for mounting the actual stamp. Cultural Diary pages will be produced for all future African-American stamp issues and will include a separate stamp and mount.

The Cultural Diary can be purchased through the Postal Store at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) or through the USA Philatelic catalog by calling toll-free 1-800-STAMP24 (1-800-782-6724) and at Post Offices that display select retail merchandise.

Since 1775, the Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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## **Expressions of African Americans: A Cultural Diary Backgrounder**

The four supplied Diary insert cards of James Baldwin, Paul Robeson, Wilma Rudolph and Kwanzaa come with four mountable stamps and a notepad that can be used as a journal to create a unique family keepsake. New Diary insert cards will be released with each upcoming African American stamp issue.

Following is a description of the photographs on the front and back of the hardbound binder. Text from each of the insert cards also follows.

Photographs on the front of this high-gloss hardbound keepsake depict African American life from the late 1800s through the 1960s.

On the front...

- Upper left: The photo of a boy wearing overalls with a cap was taken between 1942 and 1943 in Cincinnati, OH. Property of the Farm Security Administration—Office of War Information Collection in the Prints and Photographs Division at the Library of Congress. Photo by John Vachon.
- Upper right: This 1899 image features students posing in an academic class at Roger Williams University in Nashville, TN. Property of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.
- Bottom left: Gibbs orchestra marquee photograph created in 1952 outside of Harlem's Savoy Ballroom in New York City. Copyright Corbis.
- Bottom right. Couple dancing was created Feb, 26, 1947 inside Harlem's Savoy Ballroom in New York City. Copyright Corbis.
- Bottom right. This photograph by Lewis Hine taken in October 1921 features a young girl reading at the Pleasant Green School in Marlinton, WV. Property of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.

On the back...

- Upper left: Created in 1899 by an unidentified photographer, this photo features students posing in an academic class at Roger Williams University in Nashville, TN. Property of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.
- Upper right: This photograph by an unidentified photographer was created circa 1890. The location is unknown. Property of the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress.
- Lower left: This photograph by Flip Schulke was created circa 1965 in Selma, AL. Copyright Corbis.
- Lower right: This photograph by Flip Schulke was created on August 28, 1963 at Washington, DC's Union Station on the occasion of the March on Washington. Copyright Corbis.

### **James Baldwin**

“It is certain. In any case, that ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.”

- August 2, 1924: Born in Harlem Hospital in New York City

- 1948: Makes his first journey to France, and for the rest of his life, moves between Europe and America
- 1953: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, partly autobiographical first novel, is published
- 1955: Publishes first essay collection, *Notes of a Native Son*, which enhances his reputation as a master of American prose
- 1963: *The Fire Next Time* is published, urgently addressing issues raised by the civil rights movement, and solidifies Baldwin's status; his success landed him on the cover of *Time Magazine*
- November 30, 1987: Dies at his home in Sain Paul de Vence, France

James Baldwin was one of the foremost American writers of the 20th Century. In essays, plays, novels, short stories and poems, Baldwin explored various subjects, including race relations, the arts and love, always displaying a strong moral conscience. Baldwin's work made him a leading intellectual figure during the years of the civil rights movement in America. Though he called for change, he never imagined that it would come easily.

"Most of us," he wrote, "are about as eager to be changed as we were to be born, and go through our changes in a similar state of shock." Baldwin grew up in poverty and planned a career as a minister. However, by the time he graduated from high school, he had published articles, plays, fiction and poetry in his school literary magazine, and he knew he wanted to be a writer.

As a young man, Baldwin began publishing essays in periodicals such as *The Nation*. His writing was widely discussed and eagerly anticipated; Baldwin's work eloquently articulated the complexities of race relations when the civil rights movement was at its height. In 1956, Baldwin wrote, "Words Like 'freedom,' 'justice,' 'democracy' are not common concepts; on the contrary, they are rare. People are not born knowing what these are. It takes enormous and, above all, individual effort to arrive at the respect for other people that these words imply."

### **Paul Robeson**

"The artist must fight for freedom or for slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative."

- April 9, 1898: Born in Princeton, NJ
- 1928: Impresses London audiences with his rendition of "Ol' Man River" in the musical *Show Boat*
- 1930: first performs the lead in *Othello* in London
- 1933: Stars in the film *The Emperor Jones*
- 1942: Discouraged by the limited roles available to black actors, announces that he will no longer appear in films
- 1945 – 1950: Uncompromising advocacy of civil rights and support of the Soviet Union become especially controversial
- 1950: U.S. Passport revoked
- 1958: U.S. Passport reinstated
- January 23, 1976: Dies in Philadelphia
- 1998: Receives a posthumous Grammy Award for Lifetime Achievement

Actor, singer, activist, athlete—Paul Robeson was a man ahead of his time. More than 25 years after his death, Robeson is remembered not only for his prodigious talents as a performer, but also for his tireless commitment to civil rights and social justice. Robeson's career began in the early 1920s as he worked his way through law school. He acted in numerous plays and soon became known for his interpretation of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Several movie roles followed, as did concerts and recordings that popularized the spiritual as a legitimate American art form. Well known as an activist, Robeson was an outspoken participant in labor and peace movements. "As an artist I come to sing, but as a citizen, I will always speak for peace, and no one can silence me in this," he said. His opposition to fascism in Europe also made him a prominent supporter of the Allied war effort. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, his

controversial support of the Soviet Union prompted the State Department to revoke his passport for eight years. During the 1960s and 1970s, public opinion toward Robeson became more favorable. Along with his accomplishments as a performer, Robeson is also esteemed by many for his staunch commitment to his beliefs—even in the face of harassment and adversity.

## **Wilma Rudolph**

“My thoughts about life, my great moment, if I left the earth today, would be knowing that I have tried to give something to young people.”

- June 23, 1940: Born in St. Bethlehem, TN
- 1956: At the age of 16 helps the U.S. team win a bronze medal in the 400-meter team relay at the Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia
- 1960: Sets a world record at the Olympic trials in Texas, and later becomes the first American woman to win three gold medals in track-and-field during a single Olympics
- 1962: Retires from running at the height of her success
- 1983: Honored with the National Sports Award
- November 12, 1994: Dies at home in Brentwood, TN

Wilma Rudolph overcame a childhood plagued by serious illness to become one of the nation's greatest athletes. She was born on June 23, 1940, in Tennessee, and her left leg was crippled by polio at an early age, but she was determined to walk without a brace. “I think I started acquiring a competitive spirit right then and there,” she wrote in her 1977 autobiography, “a spirit that would make me successful in sports later on.”

By the time she was 12 the brace had been sent back to the hospital, and soon she was the star of her high-school track and basketball teams. Within four years, she had developed into a world-class sprinter.

At the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, 16-year-old Rudolph helped her team win a bronze medal in the 400-meter team relay. Four years later in Rome, after setting a world record at the trials in Texas, she became the first American woman to win three gold medals in track-and-field during a single Olympics. Though running on a sprained ankle, she placed first in the 100-and 200-meter dashes and guaranteed her team's victory in the 400-meter relay.

Rudolph retired from running at the height of her success, but she continued to inspire African American and female athletes, as well as the physically disabled. Respected for her perseverance and grace, she was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame in 1983 and honored with the National Sports Award in 1993.

## **Kwanzaa**

“Radhi Ni Bora Kuliko Mali”

Blessings are much better than wealth

--African Proverb

Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles)  
Umoja (Unity)  
Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)  
Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)  
Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)  
Nia (Purpose)  
Kuumba (Creativity)  
Imani (Faith)

Celebrated by millions of people around the world in the seven days from December 26 to January 1, Kwanzaa is a non-religious holiday drawing on African traditions. Its name comes from the Swahili

phrase for “first fruits.” Its origins are in harvest celebrations that occurred in ancient and modern times in various places across the African continent.

Several African traditions were synthesized and reinvented in 1966 by Maulana Karenga as the contemporary cultural festival known as Kwanzaa. Dr. Karenga chose to use Swahili because it is the most widely spoken African language.

The holiday is intended to be a time of celebration of seven principles—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith—based on values prevalent in African culture. Kwanzaa is a time to reaffirm the bonds between people; to give thanks for the blessings we enjoy; to remember ancestors; to renew our commitment to our highest cultural ideals; and to celebrate our existence.

Kwanzaa is represented by several basic symbols that reflect African culture. Some of these are corn, emblematic of children and the future; the kinara, or candle holder, symbolizing the continental African ancestors; the cup representing unity; and the seven candles indicating the seven principles described above, known in Swahili as the Nguzo Saba.