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*Dedicated to the Memory of Edwards 'Spoons' Williams*

### **3rd Annual**

In The Tradition . . .

## **Festival of Black Storytelling**

**S**ince the time of Brer' Rabbit, Black storytelling has fired the imagination and attracted the interest of the American public. Through storytelling Black Americans have created an amalgamation of their African heritage and their experiences here in America.

Black Storytelling is one of the many facets of America's cultural wealth. It is an expression of great social complexity and profound aesthetic significance.

Woven into the fabric of Black storytelling has been the essence of Black lifestyle and survival. Storytelling proves that human beings are not able to live without some sense of cultural cohesion and individual self-worth.

This is true no matter how hard their circumstance, no matter how much effort is directed toward denying them a sense of personal value.

Black identity receives expression in storytelling because it permits the presentation of emotions so deeply felt that they often cannot be openly articulated.

Storytelling documents a culture. The tales are the complex cultural communications permitted an oppressed people, their school lessons, their heroic biographies, their psychic savings bank, their children's legacies.

Black Storytelling illustrates how an entire people adapted and survived in the new world experience; how they transformed what they found into a distinctive way of life.

Storytelling describes the human behavior the group approves, indicates when the behavior is appropriate and suggests strategies necessary for the preservation of the group in a hostile environment.

Black Storytelling is a storehouse of such revelations, a repository of coded cultural messages preserved and passed by word of mouth from generation to generation.

Keeping this facet of black cultural heritage alive is the main goal of "In the tradition . . ." National Festival of Black Storytelling.

*—Dr. Fannette Thomas*

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**November 7 - 10, 1985**

**Howard University**

**University of the District of Columbia**

**National Museum of American History**

**St. Augustine Church**

**Washington, D.C.**