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## "With a Pen in Her Hand": Communities in Gloria Naylor's Fiction and in her Archives Conference

Sacred Heart University

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# “With a Pen in Her Hand”:

## Communities in Gloria Naylor’s Fiction and in her Archives Conference



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*Sacred Heart University*

*October 19 – 20, 2023*



# Welcome!

Dear Friends,

A warm welcome to our Conference celebrating Gloria Naylor's fiction and the return of her Archives to Sacred Heart University.

The story of the gift of Gloria Naylor's Archives to Sacred Heart begins with the honorary degree she received here in 1994 and the collegial relationship she and I developed over the course of several years. In 2008 Naylor donated her Archives to Sacred Heart University. In 2018 Suzanne Edwards and Mary Foltz from Lehigh University borrowed Naylor's Archives in order to digitize them. Having completed their work, the Archives have now returned to Sacred Heart University and this Conference is a celebration of Naylor's achievement and her legacy to us all.

I want to begin by thanking Suzanne Edwards and Mary Foltz for their work digitizing Gloria Naylor's Archives and for making them available to the larger community. I also thank them for loaning us the Exhibit of Naylor's works which they developed for their Symposium on Naylor.

I want to express great thanks to Nathan Lewis, Chair of the Department of Art and Graphic Design for all his work in curating and creating the Naylor Exhibit for our Conference at Sacred Heart University.

My deepest gratitude goes to Emily Bryan, co-director of this Conference, for all her work, partnership, expertise, and passion for this project.

Both Emily and I extend our deep thanks to the Connecticut Humanities Council whose grant in large part makes this Conference possible, and to Worldwide Surrogacy, LLC., and Sacred Heart University's College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Languages and Literature for their support of this Conference.

Finally, I am ever grateful to Gloria Naylor for her relationship with me and Sacred Heart University that brought the extraordinary gift of her Archives to the University.

With this Conference, we continue to honor Gloria Naylor's wish that her Archives be a living legacy to scholars, teachers, and the broader community.

**Welcome to Sacred Heart University!**

Best,

Michelle Loris and Emily Bryan



# Conference Schedule

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**Thursday, October 19, 2023**

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- 4:00 PM                    **Dattco Shuttles leave from the Circle  
Hotel Fairfield**  
*(417 Post Road, Fairfield, CT 06824)*
- 4:30 PM                    **Registration/Exhibit**  
*Main Campus Edgerton Atrium Art Gallery*
- 5:30 PM                    **Dinner**  
*The Dr. Michelle Loris Forum/Martire Center*
- 6:30 PM                    **Opening Keynote Lecture**
  - ***Dr. Maxine Lavon Montgomery***  
*(Florida State University)*  
“Archiving the Unseen: Gloria Naylor  
and Contemporary Black Women’s  
Literary History.”
- 8:00 PM                    **Shuttle Departs for Hotel**

**Friday, October 20, 2023**

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7:30 AM                    **Shuttle leaves from the Circle Hotel  
Fairfield**

8:00 – 8:45 AM        **Buffet Breakfast**  
*The Dr. Michelle Loris Forum/Martire Center*

9:00 – 10:15 AM      **Panel 1: Communities of Women and  
Scholars**

*Dr. Michelle Loris Forum*

- *Jamilah Bradshaw: “Black Maternal Conjure-Somatics in Gloria Naylor’s Fiction”*
- *Zach Hutchins: “A Community of Color: What Naylor Asks of Literary Critics”*
- *Sabrina Bramwell and Alexandra Omogbadegun: “Exclusive Feminism: Reading the Mad Woman in the Basement in Gloria Naylor’s *Linden Hills*”*

**Panel 2: Religious Communities**

*Martire E381*

- *June-Ann Greeley: “The Community of Forgotten Women of *Linden Hills*”*
- *Lana N. Lockhart: “My Pen is my Pulpit: A Womanist Theological Critique of Community in Gloria Naylor’s Literature”*
- *Peyton Eldridge White, “Intergenerational communities of conjure in Naylor’s novel, *Mama Day*”*

### **Panel 3: Surveillance and Compromised Communities**

*Martire W350*

“The few who have the courage to ask”: reflections on surveillance, power, and compromised communities in Gloria Naylor’s *1996*”

*Lauren Gilmore, moderator*

- *Tarshia M. Griffin*: “Social Fragmentation and the Fallacious Conceptions in Gloria Naylor’s *1996*”
- *Isaiah Frost Rivera*: “Representing Necessary Failures: Contingent Communities and Archival Liminality in Gloria Naylor’s *1996*”

### **Panel 4: Black Writers’ Communities**

*Martire W310*

- *Kiana T. Murphy*: “Black Feminist Literary Worldbuilding in Gloria Naylor’s *The Women of Brewster Place*”
- *Bridgette Sanders*: “Self-Love as Radical Practice: Finding Community in Gloria Naylor’s *The Women of Brewster Place*”
- *Peter Wilson*: “The Elitism of W.E.B. Du Bois in Gloria Naylor’s Literature”

10:15 – 10:30 AM **Break and Refreshments**  
(Hallway in front of Martire E381)

10:30 – 11:45 AM **Panel 5: Violent Communities in 1996**  
*Martire W310*

- *Robert McCready*: “Gang stalking in 1996”
- *J. Brendan Shaw*: “The battle for my mind”: The cruelty of community in Naylor’s 1996

**Panel 6: Communities of Space and Place**  
*Martire E381*

- *Jennifer O’Reilly*: “The Sea Islands as a Site of Memory and Connection in *Mama Day* and Naylor’s Archive”
- *Marika Ceschia*: “Unsettling the Matricidal Praxes of the Plantationocene: Gloria Naylor’s *Mama Day*”
- *Olivia Brooks*: Toward Cultural Bridges and Toppled Hierarchy: Geography and Racial Economy in Gloria Naylor’s *Sapphira Wade*”

**Panel 7: “Creating A Digital Humanities Project on Ecology in Gloria Naylor’s *Mama Day*”**  
*Martire W350*

- *Lauren Gilmore*
- *Afiwa Afandalo*
- *Ellen Boyd*

12:00 – 1:00 PM **Lunch**  
*The Dr. Michelle Loris Forum/Martire Center*



1:00 – 2:00 PM

**Keynote Speakers:**

*(Dr. Michelle Loris Forum/Martire Center)*

***Dr. Suzanne Edwards and Dr. Mary Foltz***

*(Lehigh University):*

“Reflections on the Gloria Naylor Archive Project: Collaboration, Access, and Engagement”

2:15 – 3:15 PM

**Poet Laureate of Connecticut**

**Antoinette Brim-Bell**

*Dr. Michelle Loris Forum/Martire Center*

3:15 – 3:30 PM

**Break**

3:30 – 4:30 PM

**Closing Keynote Speaker:**

**Dr. Jennifer D. Williams**

*(Howard University)*

“Black Feminist Regard: Gloria Naylor and Ann Petry’s Literary Friendship”

*Dr. Michelle Loris Forum/Martire Center*

4:30 - 5:30 PM

**Reception with heavy hors d’oeuvres**

*The Dr. Michelle Loris Forum/Martire Center*

5:45 PM

**Shuttle Departs for Hotel**

# About Us

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## SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

### **Mission**

Sacred Heart University, founded to be governed and administered by laity, is rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition and the liberal arts. Open and welcoming, the University embraces a vision for social justice and educates students in mind, body and spirit to prepare them personally and professionally to make a difference in the global community.

### **Core Values**

Flowing from the long tradition of Catholic universities, the University's core values are the following:

- Preservation, transmission and development of the Catholic intellectual and liberal arts traditions.
- Commitment to excellence in all that we do.
- Pursuit of truth and knowledge as intrinsically valuable through teaching and scholarship.
- Promotion of the common good of society.
- Recognition of the dignity and worth of every human being.

We cherish the tradition and charisma that has been entrusted to us. We are committed to continuing this vision with a pioneering spirit that makes Sacred Heart University a leading Catholic university in the United States.

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## **The Center for Catholic Studies**

The Center for Catholic Studies aims to situate Sacred Heart University as a premier Catholic institution committed to the study and discussion of Catholic intellectual, social, cultural and artistic thought. The center promotes innovative programming, teaching and scholarship that demonstrate Sacred Heart University's mission rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition and inspired by Vatican II as a living, global reality, relevant to our lives and the world in which we live.



