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**GWENDOLYN BROOKS AT 100**

***Dozens of organizations launch “Our Miss Brooks: A Centennial Celebration” to honor groundbreaking Pulitzer Prize winner and Illinois Poet Laureate***

Chicago, IL – To honor the legacy and enduring contributions of poet Gwendolyn Brooks, and to inspire a new generation of writers, dozens of institutions, artists and educators have joined to create programming for **Our Miss Brooks: A Centennial Celebration**. Through June 2018, the celebration features readings, performances, school programs, discussions, exhibits and more; most will be free and open to the public.

Gwendolyn Brooks was the first African American writer to receive a Pulitzer Prize, and she served as the Illinois Poet Laureate from 1968 to 2000. Through her work, she was an activist, a feminist and an insightful observer of Black life. Perhaps no other poet has captured the essence of Chicago life more than Gwendolyn Brooks. In the centennial of her birth, she remains an important, historic voice.

**Our Miss Brooks: A Centennial Celebration** (OMB100) kicks off on Thursday, February 2, 2017 with an unprecedented and high-profile reading of Brooks’ works by the five other African American Pulitzer Prize-winning poets: Rita Dove, Yusef Komunyakaa, Natasha Trethewey, Tracy K. Smith and Gregory Pardlo. The reading will be held at the Art Institute of Chicago’s Rubloff Auditorium from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and is free and open to the public; [online registration](#) is required. The reading is produced by The Chicago Community Trust with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Poetry Foundation. It will be hosted by Kendra G., WGCI-FM morning show radio host, and moderated by Natalie Moore, WBEZ-FM’s South Side reporter and author of [The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and America](#).

“Gwendolyn Brooks is one of the few poets whose work was as at home in pool halls, community centers and bars as it was in academia and classrooms,” says Quraysh Ali Lansana, artistic director of OMB100. “Her art endures because it’s so finely crafted and meticulously constructed around timeless subjects. She lived in Chicago, among us and chronicled 20<sup>th</sup>-century black life in Chicago more comprehensively than other writer of her time. This celebration will remind some, and enlighten others, of just how much she loved this city.”

More than 40 local and national partners are developing OMB100 programs:

American Writer's Museum  
Beverly Art Center  
Brooks Permissions  
Center for Black Literature at  
Medgar Evers College  
Chicago Humanities Festival  
Chicago Literary Hall of Fame  
Chicago Park District  
Chicago State University  
Chicago Public Schools  
Chicago Transit Authority  
City of Chicago Department  
of Culture and Special Events  
DuSable Museum

eta Creative Arts Foundation  
Guild Complex  
Hands on Stanzas/Poetry  
Center  
Hyde Park Art Center  
Illinois Humanities  
Jane Addams Hull-House  
Museum  
Jazz Institute of Chicago  
Joffrey Ballet  
Poetry Foundation  
South Side Community Art  
Center  
The Art Institute of Chicago

The School of the Art  
Institute of Chicago  
UChicago (Court Theatre)  
UChicago (Center for the  
Study of Race, Politics and  
Culture)  
UChicago (Film Studies)  
UChicago (Presents)  
UChicago (Logan Center for  
the Arts)  
Victory Gardens Theater  
Young Chicago Authors

Information for all OMB100 events can be found on the celebration's website,  
[www.gwendolynbrooks100.org](http://www.gwendolynbrooks100.org).