

Staged reading of *Dessa Rose* to be presented May 16 at UCSD

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Media Contact: Lucinda Rubio, Literature Department, (619) 534-3216, lrubio@ucsd.edu or Jan Jennings, (619) 822-1684, jnjennings@ucsd.edu

STAGED READING OF *DESSA ROSE TO BE PRESENTED MAY 16 AT UCSD*

A staged reading from Sherley Anne Williams' historical novel, *Dessa Rose*, will be presented at 8 p.m. May 16 in the Price Center Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego. The event is free and open to the public.

UCSD theatre professor Floyd Gaffney will direct the stage adaptation by educator and playwright T. Ford.

Award-winning actress Sylvia M'Lafi Thompson will portray *Dessa Rose*. Thompson is the recipient of a Critics Circle Award and a Los Angeles DramaLogue Award, both for best actress. She is a National Endowment for the arts fellow and has served on the San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and the California Arts Council.

Appearing with her will be Sandra Ellis-Troy, Bill Dunnam and Arnold Spearman. Ellis-Troy has performed at the Old Globe Theatre, Lambs Players Theatre and the San Diego Repertory Theatre. She may be seen in the title role of *Auntie Mame* opening June 11 at the North Coast Repertory Theatre.

Dunnam has worked in local theatre since 1978, last appearing in *Quiet Love* at the San Diego Repertory Theatre. He also works in film and TV in Los Angeles.

Spearman studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City and has appeared in films, including *Bloodstream*, and on television in *Virtual Reality*.

Dessa Rose author Williams is a literature professor at UCSD. The novel is set in the time of slavery in America and tells of a young pregnant black woman, *Dessa Rose*, and through her experiences, of the relationship between black and white, master and slave, and a building of interracial friendship and respect.

The staged reading is being presented in conjunction with the UCSD-sponsored Black Women Writers and the 'High Art' of Afro-American Letters conference which marks the 12th anniversary of the publication of *Dessa Rose* and honors the contributions to literature and culture of black women writers, scholars and critics over the past 25 years.

Conference activities run May 15-17. UCSD literature professor Ann duCille is conference chair. For further information on conference activities or the staging of *Dessa Rose* call Lucinda Rubio at 534-3216.

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