

UCSD Thurgood Marshall College Commemorates 50th Anniversary Of Brown v. Board Of Education With The New Play - The Haunting Of Jim Crow

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Patricia Quill

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that declared racially segregated schools unconstitutional, the University of California, San Diego Thurgood Marshall College will present *The Haunting of Jim Crow*, a new play by Allan Havis, of the UCSD Department of Theatre and Dance. Three public performances are scheduled:

Monday, May 17, 12:15 p.m. California Western School of Law, Gafford Moot Court Room, 350 Cedar Street, San Diego

Monday, May 17, 7 p.m. UCSD Wagner Dance Building, Studio III

Wednesday, May 19, 8 p.m. UCSD Wagner Dance Building, Studio III *The Haunting of Jim Crow*, entwines two fascinating strands of American history: The landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and an intimate exposé of the phenomenal southern icon - Senator Strom Thurmond. Capturing the tumultuous and paradoxical politics of America during the Eisenhower years, *The Haunting of Jim Crow* also leaps forcefully into our own time to take up the public and private life of Strom Thurmond and the dramatic revelations of his mixed race daughter Essie Mae Washington-Williams.

"I felt that a college proudly named after Thurgood Marshall should do something out of the ordinary for the 50th anniversary of the Brown decision," said Michael Schudson, UCSD professor and director of the Thurgood Marshall Institute. "What is so hard to convey to students," Schudson said, "is the realization that history matters, that things really do change, that people make decisions that transform what the experience of being a human being is. How can students today grasp what legally segregated schools meant to black children or what lessons it taught white children? How can we convey what the world before 1954 (and actually for years after) was like? To me, this meant that somehow we had to dramatize the events. So I was thrilled when Allan Havis agreed to breathe life into that notion and give it his own unique vision."

UCSD and Cal Western professor Michal R. Belknap will present a brief lecture at California Western School of Law prior to the performance and a panel discussion will follow. Panel discussions follow each performance at UCSD and will include playwright Allan Havis, director Delicia Turner Sonnenberg and UCSD students, as well as guest sociology professor John Skrentny on the 17th and Judge Randa Trapp on the 19th. Michael Schudson will serve as moderator.

San Diego radio station KPBS will also air a broadcast of the play and a discussion with host Dirk Sutro on *The Lounge* at 6 p.m. on May 17.

Allan Havis, head of playwriting at UCSD, has had his work produced at theatres across the U.S. and in Europe, including the Old Globe, Seattle's ACT, Odyssey, Long Wharf, South Coast Rep, American Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, Virginia Stage, WPA, and Philadelphia Theatre Co. He has been commissioned by

England's Chichester Festival, Sundance, Ted Danson's Anasazi Productions, South Coast Rep, Mixed Blood, CSC Rep, Malashock Dance and Carolina Chamber Chorale. He is the author of *American Political Plays* (University of Illinois) and the children's novel *Albert The Astronomer* (Harper/Collins). Havis is the recipient of Guggenheim, Rockefeller, Kennedy Center/American Express, CBS, HBO, and NEA Awards.

Thurgood Marshall College is one of six undergraduate colleges at UCSD. From its beginnings in the 1970s as the third of UCSD's colleges to be established, it has been dedicated to educating students as both scholars and citizens. Thurgood Marshall, later to be the first African American appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, was director of the NAACP Legal and Education Defense Fund and in that role masterminded the NAACP strategy to end racial segregation and argued *Brown v. the Board of Education* before the Supreme Court.

In addition to *The Haunting of Jim Crow*, the UCSD Social Sciences and Humanities Library will host events and an exhibition commemorating the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. For information about the library events, go to <http://sshl.ucsd.edu/brown>.

For more information about *The Haunting of Jim Crow*, call (858) 534-4002 during business hours.

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