



Ashley Ratliff

WRITING SAMPLES

Table of Contents

[PRESS RELEASES](#)

[MARKETING
COLLATERAL
SAMPLES](#)

[Click Above Links to Jump to Section](#)

“

Press Releases

”

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT & NEW
PRODUCT LAUNCH RELEASE

Celebrate. Educate. Preserve
Seeding the Future of Black Poetry



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Internationally Renowned Black Poets to Convene in Washington, D.C. to Celebrate Historic Center for African American Poetry

HARRISONBURG, Va., July 15, 2019 – On September 27-28, 2019, the most notable Black poets of our time will gather at the nation's capital to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the [Furious Flower Poetry Center](#), the first academic center devoted to Black poetry in the United States. Among them will be three U.S. poet laureates ([Rita Dove](#), [Natasha Trethewey](#), [Tracy K. Smith](#)), iconic poet/activists [Sonia Sanchez](#) and [Nikki Giovanni](#), Pulitzer Prize-winners [Tyehimba Jess](#) and [Gregory Pardlo](#), and Pushcart Prize-winner [A Van Jordan](#).

The celebration will convene on September 27 with a benefit gala at the Grand Hyatt Washington, and culminate on September 28, with a poetry convocation at [The Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture](#).

The Events:

To commemorate the anniversary and kick off its endowment initiative, the Furious Flower Poetry Center will host a benefit gala on **September 27 at the Grand Hyatt Washington**. The funds raised will go towards preserving Furious Flower's legacy through an endowment that would ensure its longevity and ability to continue serving students, educators and poets everywhere. The event will be emceed by National Book Award-winner [Terrance Hayes](#). Ticket information and sponsorship opportunities are available [here](#).

On Saturday, September 28, there will be a day-long convocation at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. The public will be invited to enjoy poetry readings and panel discussions by an array of influential poets. **The convocation is free and open to the public, although pre-registration is required.**

###

About The Furious Flower Poetry Center

Founded on the campus of James Madison University in 1994 by professor and writer Dr. Joanne Gabbin, Furious Flower started as a conference that honored Gwendolyn Brooks, the first Black author to win the Pulitzer Prize. Hundreds of writers, poetry enthusiasts, scholars, and notable poets attended the revolutionary event, noted as the first of its kind since the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s. This event was the catalyst for the iconic and nationally-recognized center that now offers diverse programming to ensure the visibility, inclusion and critical consideration of Black poets worldwide.

Event & Media Contact: Ashley Ratliff, ashley@communicationsetcetera.com, 919-218-5333



CRANE

Media Contact:

Ashley Washington

M: 803-507-4376

awashington@cranems.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Crane Merchandising Systems Announces Commercial
Release of Merchant Media Touch with New Features**

Williston, SC (April 7, 2014) – Today Crane Merchandising Systems announced the commercial availability of its next generation snack and food machine, the Merchant Media with 7” Touchscreen. Built to last, and featuring exciting new retail tools, the Merchant Media Touch revitalizes vending by attracting and engaging consumers, resulting in increased sales and new business for operators.

The Merchant Media Touch incorporates consumer friendly technology that meets the expectations of today’s consumers. Its new touchscreen empowers and enhances many of the other features now available, including the digital shopping cart, the ability to purchase more than one product at a time, the opportunity to view nutrition facts, vibrant advertisements, and eye-catching promotions, all of which draw the consumer in and drive sales for the operator.

Additionally, Merchant Media Touch features a built-in credit card reader and easy-to-customize graphics, both of which can help operators differentiate their offering to win new business. In fact, when combined on a Media machine, the built-in credit card reader and high-visibility credit card graphics specifically, have demonstrated the ability to increase credit-card usage by 100%, including multi-vends of over 20%.

“The positive response to Merchant Media Touch has been exciting. The way consumers are embracing the new technology lets us know that we have accomplished our goal of providing the industry with a next generation vending machine that will be relevant for years to come and be able to compete with other evolving retail channels,” said Ignacio Santa Cruz, product manager for Crane Merchandising Systems. *“At Crane we strive to provide vending operators with tools they need to succeed and we truly believe that the Merchant Media Touch will do just that, in terms of sales, new business and longevity.”*

With over 1,000 units in the field over the last year, Crane conducted extensive field tests to ensure Media Touch upholds the highest standards of durability and reliability. It features durable capacitive touchscreen technology and high-impact glass that protects the touchscreen from everyday use or vandalism attempt. Its

CRANE

scratch-resistant polycarbonate protects user interface graphics from peeling, tearing or vandalism. Additionally, built on NAMA Open Standards, it operates on the most advanced vending platform in the industry, and the use of advanced remote monitoring tools ensures optimal retail and operational results.

Merchant Media Touch is available to order through Crane Merchandising Systems' sales representatives or through its distributor network. It will be on display at the 2014 NAMA OneShow (Crane booth #601).

About Crane

*Crane Co. is a diversified global manufacturer of highly engineered industrial products traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: CR). One of its segments, **Crane Merchandising Systems**, designs and manufactures a diverse, yet integrated portfolio of automatic merchandising equipment across multiple verticals, including hot and cold beverage, snack, and food. It also offers other vending solutions including cashless processing, payment devices, vending management software and wireless communication technology. Its legacy of brands (Automatic Products®, Dixie Narco®, GPL®, National Vendors™, Stentorfield™ and Streamware®) enables Crane to provide customers a complete, cross-platform solution while maintaining innovation, quality and service. www.cranems.com*

Secured Press Coverage on Previous Press Release

Video Coverage:

- ▶ WGN: The consumer features of the FitPick Media Machine are explained by Ashley Washington:
<http://mms.tveyes.com/transcript.asp?StationID=2740&DateTime=4/11/2014%209:21:50%20AM&playclip=true>
- ▶ NBC Chicago: During an overview of the NAMA OneShow, close-ups of the FitPick Media Machine are displayed.
<http://mms.tveyes.com/transcript.asp?StationID=685&DateTime=4/10/2014%205:15:28%20PM&playclip=true>
- ▶ First Business News: Kirn Reis is featured briefly here discussing the traditional perceptions of vending snacks. Our booth (the Just Add Cashless wall) can be seen in this clip, as well as close-ups of the FitPick Media machine:
<http://firstbusinessnews.com/defendingvending41114-3/>

Print Coverage:

- ▶ *Automatic Merchandiser April 2014 (Digital Copy:*
http://automaticmerchandiser.epubxp.com/title/9832?utm_source=Digital&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AUTM140409003&o_eid=5224C7791501F4Y
 - News brief on the VendMAX Micro-Market Integration (page 13)
 - Brendan Kehoe quoted in the story “EMV: What You Need to Know” (page 54)
- ▶ *Vending Times: March 2014 - Why Cashless? Why Crane? Story - by Brendan Kehoe (page 23)*

Online Press Release Coverage/Pickups

- ▶ Vending Times Online:
<https://www.vendingtimes.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=EB79A487112B48A296B38C81345C8C7F&nm=Vending+Features&type=Publishing&mod=Publications%3A%3AArticle&mid=8F3A7027421841978F18BE895F87F791&tier=4&id=663354DF54144BE3ACCF23BF02E91493>
- ▶ VendingMarketWatch.com:
<http://www.vendingmarketwatch.com/news/11387469/crane-announces-commercial-release-of-merchant-media-touch-with-new-features>
- ▶ Vendiscuss.Net: <http://vendiscuss.net/index.php?/topic/19678-crane-merchandising-systems-introduces-fit-pick-branded-merchant-media-machine/>

“

MARKETING COLLATERAL SAMPLES

”

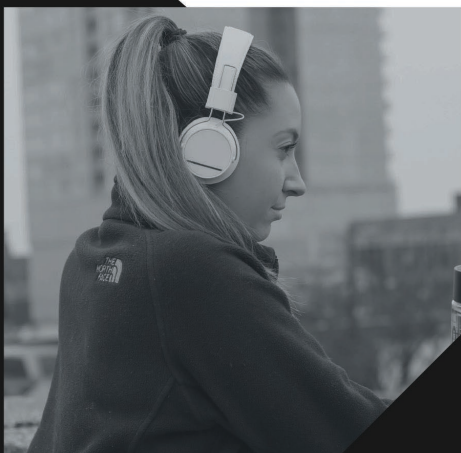
CUSTOMER SUPPORT HANDOUT &
EVENT BROCHURE
(Both designed by me using
Adobe Illustrator)

MARKETING YOUR AUDIOBOOK

Four areas that every author can and should focus on when releasing an audiobook.

Prepared for
you by

Lyric
Audiobooks



1. PROMOTIONS & PR

2. YOUR WEBSITE

3. ADVERTISING

4. SOCIAL MEDIA

1. PROMOTIONS & PR >>



Interviews: Mention the audiobook and narrators during every interview or whenever you speak publicly about the book.



Press Release: Send a press release and/or pitch email to all relevant audiobook groups, bloggers, podcasts and publications to promote the release and inquire about a review. (See [Lyric's curated list of outlets](#))



Free Downloads: Distribute [download cards](#) at events, offering access to custom content like audio samples, narrator interviews, exclusive footage, etc. [Need help with this? See our supplemental marketing services brochure.](#)

Offer [promo codes](#) to bloggers, reviewers and fans for audiobook downloads in exchange for reviews through Apple Books, Audible and/or Amazon.

2. YOUR WEBSITE >>



Link to Your Audiobook: On your website, include links to your audiobook on all of the corresponding book's pages. Include in your e-book too!



Blog: If you have an email newsletter or blog, advertise the audiobook there using sidebar ads.



SoundCloud: Create audiobook excerpts and make available on a designated page of your website. Provide purchase links to all available stores (Audible, Apple Books, Downpour, etc.). You can also use an Amazon Associates account to create revenue-generating purchase links.

3. ADVERTISING >>

- **Sponsor A Podcast:** Podcasts are a gateway to audiobooks, as consumers who engage with digital content are more likely to adopt them, if they haven't already. By sponsoring a podcast, you're tapping into that already-established potential customer base. Find podcasts that have a connection to a theme in your book and/or the romance genre and discuss the various forms of advertising they may offer (i.e. 15-second pre-roll, 60-second mid-roll, and/or 30-second post-roll ads or plugs).*
- **Invest in BookBub Ads:** In addition to ensuring your audiobook and e-book are available on BookBub, you can advertise in its daily subscriber email targeting specific readers. They also have a new audio-dedicated service called Chirp that is currently in beta and is expected to be rolled out later this year.*
- **Advertise on Audiobookboom.com:** Advertise in its weekly newsletter via a "List & Review" ad that encourages listeners to review the audiobook.*



*Need help with managing advertising? See our supplemental marketing services brochure.

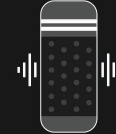
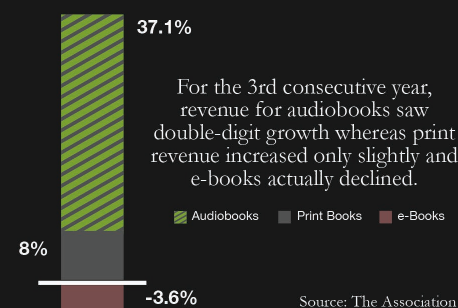
INTERESTING FACTS & STATS - 2018



1 in 5 U.S. adults have listened to an audiobook

Source: Pew Research Center (2018)

% Change in Trade Rev by Format (2018)



73% of audiobook listeners have used a smartphone to listen to audiobooks at some point. 35% say they own a smart speaker, 5% of whom use it most to listen to audiobooks.

Source: 2018 APA Research Program conducted by Edison Research

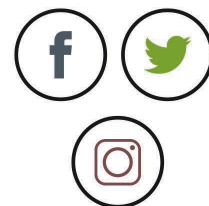
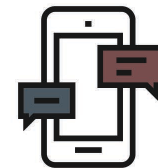
4. SOCIAL MEDIA >>

- **Routine Posts:** Schedule posts leading up to the audiobook release that highlight key phases of the production process:
 - Announce your casting
 - Capture short video of the narrator during the recording process to tease the audiobook
 - Reveal the audiobook cover (*authors should always create a custom audiobook cover with narrator names prominently featured, not just a square version of the book cover*)
 - Announce the availability of the audiobook on release day with links of where to purchase it.

Other Post Ideas: Incorporate current events and tie them back to the themes in the book.

- **Utilize Facebook Live:** Conduct a Facebook Live interview with the narrator(s) that you can post on your page. Also create one of you speaking for the narrator's page.

- **Secure Facebook Ads:** But don't do so blindly. Utilize Facebook's Optimized CPM and Audience Insights tools to (1) set a budget and strategy and (2) determine your target market based on who already follows you. Then incorporate striking graphics and link the ad to your audiobook landing page.



Event Brochure Sample



*“We poets are the
bearers of a trust that
spans generations.”*

-Rita Dove

Celebrate. Educate. Preserve.
Seeding the Future of Black Poetry

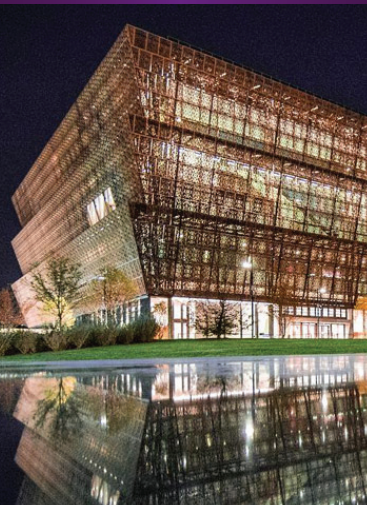
Furious Flower 25th Anniversary Celebration
September 27-28, 2019 | Washington, D.C.



“ If our children are unable to say what they mean, no one will know how they feel. If they have no way to express their lives, how much easier it would be for others to neglect their humanity.

”

-Rita Dove



Join us as we celebrate 25 years
and seed the future of Black poetry!

SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2019
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FRIDAY | 7:00 PM

Benefit Gala

The Grand Hyatt Washington
1000 H St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Honorary Host Committee

Rita Dove Marilyn Nelson
Nikki Giovanni Gregory Pardlo
A. Van Jordan Sonia Sanchez

Tracy K. Smith

SATURDAY | 9:00 AM

25th Anniversary Celebration

National Museum of
African American History and Culture
1400 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20560

Celebrate. Educate. Preserve
Seeding the Future of Black Poetry



On Friday, September 27, 2019 the Furious Flower Poetry Center will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a benefit gala that will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. Together with our honorary host committee which includes celebrated writers Rita Dove, Nikki Giovanni, A. Van Jordan, Marilyn Nelson, Gregory Pardlo, Sonia Sanchez and Tracy K. Smith, the Furious Flower Poetry Center asks that you consider supporting the future of Black poetry through one of our gala sponsorships.

As the first academic center devoted solely to African American poetry, Furious Flower has grown to become a nationally recognized organization dedicated to ensuring the visibility, inclusion and critical consideration of Black poets. Through our diverse programming, Furious Flower has a positive impact on the way people of all ages interact with poetry. Our programs include children's creativity camps, slam academies for teenagers, poetry prizes for emerging poets, collegiate summits, and seminars for teachers featuring distinguished poets like Sonia Sanchez and Yusef Komunyakaa.

We want to ensure the continuation of the work that we have been doing at James Madison University for 25 years. As a supporter of this event, you will contribute to the endowment of the Furious Flower Poetry Center, securing its longevity and continued success for years to come. We invite you to join us for the Gala at the Grand Hyatt Hotel and the 25th Anniversary Celebration at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. on September 27-28, 2019. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joanne V. Gabbin
Executive Director, Furious Flower Poetry Center

WHO WE ARE

In the almost twenty-five years since its inception, Furious Flower's programs have reached thousands of poets, educators, students, and poetry lovers around the world. From our groundbreaking media and anthologies, to our children's creativity camp and summer seminars, to our decade-defining conferences, Furious Flower has impacted literary communities on local, regional, national and international levels.

Our programming seeks to cultivate an appreciation for poetry among all students—from elementary to graduate school and beyond. As part of our mission to support and promote Black poets at all stages of their careers, we aim to create platforms for them to encounter their readers and for readers to experience and engage with Black literary culture in new and exciting ways.

“These voices you have harbored bring us the same wonderful possibility to get to know people who are unconscious of their place in history but only trying to share a truth. Some are angry; some are loving; some question and some feel they have answers: All are Honest.”

-Nikki Giovanni



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT

This 25th Anniversary Celebration offers a unique opportunity to recognize the essential work of Furious Flower and to help secure the future of its mission.

Your donations and ticket purchases will help us endow this vibrant cultural center and will be instrumental in preserving Furious Flower's legacy, ensuring its longevity and ability to continue serving students, educators and poets everywhere.



FURIOUS FLOWER GOES GLOBAL

We want to ensure that as American literary culture makes its global imprint, that Black American literature and its relevant history are represented as a part of that larger narrative. To that end, Furious Flower staff members have begun to take part in various international initiatives. In 2018 we participated in the BOCAS literary festival in Trinidad and Tobago and took distinguished American poets to Eswatini in Southern African as part of the U.S. State Department's Arts Envoy Program. Our goal: to provide opportunities for Black poets both at home and abroad to encounter each other's work and history.

WHY WE DO IT

From the power of the Black Arts Movement to the sweep of spoken word; from work songs and blues to the poems of luminaries like Gwendolyn Brooks and Maya Angelou, Black literature continues to make vital contributions to the landscape of American letters. Furious Flower celebrates and preserves those voices and educates future generations about their contributions to our culture.



Gala Support Opportunities

Laureate Circle | \$25,000+

One table with priority placement (9 seats + 1 for a notable poet)
Logo placement on all printed materials at the event
Verbal name recognition during event program
Five invitations to the VIP reception at Saturday's celebration
Logo inclusion in pre-event communications
Logo inclusion on promotional materials
Recognition on the Furious Flower Poetry Center website

Poet Circle | \$10,000+

One table with priority placement (10 seats)
Logo inclusion in event program and during event
Five invitations to the VIP reception at Saturday's celebration
Logo inclusion in pre-event communications
Logo inclusion on promotional materials
Recognition on the Furious Flower Poetry Center website

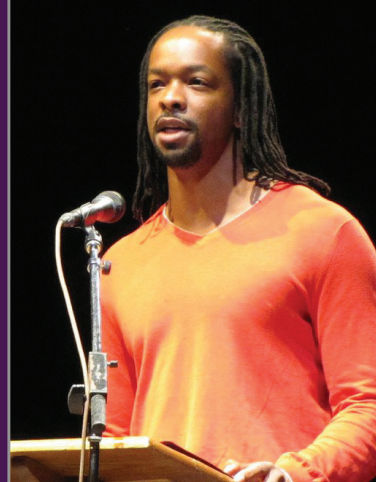
Reader Circle | \$5,000+

One table (10 seats)
Name listed in event program
Name listed in select pre-event communications
Recognition on the Furious Flower Poetry Center website

Individual Ticket | \$250

Includes dinner, dancing and program, as well as a donation to the Furious Flower Poetry Center

The amount of your contribution that is deductible for federal income tax purposes is limited to the excess of the amount contributed over the fair market value of the goods and services provided. We estimate the fair market value of those goods and services to be \$125 per ticket and \$1,250 per table.



“When you're a poet, you understand that what you do you do to give, you do to make a contribution to literature, to poetry, to something that you really believe makes a difference. What Furious Flower has done is made a difference and allowed people like me to change and to grow.”

-Jericho Brown



2019 SUPPORTER REPLY CARD



Company / Individual Name

Address 1

Address 2

City

State

Zip

Contact Name

Title

Phone #

Email

SUPPORT LEVELS

☐ Laureate Circle - \$25,000+

☐ Poet Circle - \$10,000

☐ Reader Circle - \$5,000

☐ Individual Ticket(s) _____ #

☐ Donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Thank you so much for your support! Please make check payable to the JMU Foundation and return with this card to:

Furious Flower Poetry Center
MSC 3802
500 Cardinal Dr.
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Furious Flower Poetry Center is a program of James Madison University. The James Madison University Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN 23-7156305. It acts as the depository for contributions supporting the various programs of James Madison University.



Back Page: Children in Arts Envoy Program in Eswatini Africa; Sonia Sanchez; camper from 2017 Furious Flower Children’s Creativity Camp; Nate Marshall; Matthew Shenoda and Kwame Dawes; Nikki Giovanni; students from the 2016 Furious Flower Collegiate Summit; Nbobie Iwalo and Qiniso Motsa, Eswatini poets. Front Page: Frank X Walker; Ravi Coltrane at 2014 Furious Flower Poetry Conference; Dominique Christina; Danez Smith. Page 4: Rita Dove, Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie, and Nikki Giovanni at 2014 Furious Flower Poetry Conference. Page 5: Yusef Komunyakaa and attendees of the 2017 “Facing It” Legacy Seminar; Brenda Marie Osbey, Anastacia Renee and Tyehimba Jess with Lauren K. Alleyne and Joanne V. Gabbin at the 2018 Collegiate Summit. Page 7: Jericho Brown; and camper from 2017 Children’s Creativity Camp.





Thank You.

ASHLEYWRATLIFF@GMAIL.COM
919-218-5333