

8th Annual Miss Lou Reading Festival

Persons attending the eighth annual Louise Bennett-Coverley Reading Festival will enjoy an evening of rich cultural performances

to be staged on Saturday, February 7, starting at 2:00 p.m., at the Broward College Performing Cultural Arts Theater, South Campus located at 7200 Pines Boulevard in Pembroke Pines. Under the patronage of Jamaica's Consul General Franz Hall, the event will feature Jamaican author and literary scholar, Dr. Carolyn Cooper, CD, who will share perspectives of her relationship with the late Hon. Louise Bennett Coverley, "Miss Lou", OJ, MBE (1919-2006), former international cultural ambassador. Dr. Cooper is a professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona campus in Jamaica. She is also the Director of the Institute of Caribbean Studies and was instrumental in establishing the Reggae Studies Unit at the University, Mona campus in 1994. This Unit continues to host public lectures and symposiums featuring performing artists and other practitioners in the music industry in Jamaica and on the international circuit. She is also the author of several publications about Jamaican popular culture and Jamaica's Dancehall culture, parts of which focus on the legacy of Louise Bennett-Coverley (Miss Lou) and her influence on contemporary dancehall. The event is free to the public, and is titled "Dat Cunny Jamma Woman" and forms part of the annual schedule of activities for the South Regional-Broward College Library's celebration of Black History Month. Entertainment will be provided from a selection of notable Jamaican artists from the South Florida Diasporic community, including the Jamaica Folk Revue, the Tallawah Mento Band and others who had worked with the cultural icon and internationally renowned folklorist, author, and social commentator during her long and expansive career. There will be a special musical tribute to be performed by the Tallawah Mento Band in celebration of the 70th Birthday anniversary of the former international reggae icon, the late Hon. Robert (Bob) Nesta Marley, OD, who was born on February 6, 1945. Proceeds from fundraisers and sales of Miss Lou's works — books, CDs, and other memorabilia, will continue to support the annual Louise Bennett Coverley Memorial Scholarships tenable at the Edna Manley College (EMC) of Visual and Performing Arts in Kingston. To date, eleven students have been recipients of the scholarship at the Schools of Drama, Dance, and Music at that institution. And now for the first time, the LB-C Scholarship will also be presented to a deserving student enrolled at the Broward College here in South Florida. The first annual presentation will be awarded at the Reading Festival. The Scholarship was named, posthumously, in honor of Jamaica's cultural ambassador and is awarded to students at both institutions pursuing studies in the performing arts. The annual Reading Festival was started in 2008 by Mrs. Norma Darby, former Executive Director of the Jamaica Folk Revue, following the death of Miss Lou who passed away at age 86 years old in Toronto, Canada. Ms. Lou was buried at the Jamaica's National Heroes Park in Kingston. The Festival is supported by the Broward College, the South Regional-Broward College Library, the Friends of the Library, the Jamaica Tourist Board and collaborated with several local Jamaican-owned companies and associates.