

MARGARET BURROUGHS

A remarkable person...

By GEORGIA GEIS
Staff Writer

"What shall I tell my children who are black of what it means to be a captive in this dark skin? What shall I tell my dear one, fruit of my womb, of how beautiful they are when everywhere they turn they are faced with abhorrence of everything that is black."

Carolyn Avent-Oshun remembers hearing Dr. Margaret Burroughs recite these words when she was nine years old. Sixty years later, Avent-Oshun is a professional storyteller and she credits Burroughs for shaping her life.

"Through the years...I have been drawn to the cultural arts and I would say [Burroughs] planted the seed within me," said Avent-Oshun. "I have a sense of pride in my ethnicity and also I work in the community to keep our stories and histories alive."

There are countless stories of those who have been influenced by Burroughs, who will celebrate her 90th birthday tomorrow.

She is a poet, an artist, an institution builder, a teacher, a volunteer, an editor, a park commissioner,

an advocate, and a world traveler.

"We can't wait to honor Dr. Burroughs when she is no longer with us. We have to honor her now," said Philip Jackson, founder of the non-profit education advocacy group Black Star Project, which held a reception in Burroughs' honor last week to raise money for the many institutions she supports.

The Legacy Tribute Coordinating committee formed to plan events (see sidebar) to "highlight her lifetime achievement and to pay tribute to a living legend," according to Avent-Oshun who is co-chair



1910



November 1, 1917
Born in St. Rosa, La. Moved to Chicago as a young girl with her parents, Alexander and Octavia Taylor.

1930



1937
Receives Elementary Teacher's Certificate from Chicago Normal College.

1940

December 1940 Co-founded the South Side Community Arts Center, 3831 S. Michigan Ave., as a part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Federal Art Project. In May 1941, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt arrives from Washington to cut the ribbon. The center is still open today and Burroughs serves on the board.

December 1943 Marries Charles Gordon Burroughs.

1946 Receives Bachelor's of Art from the Art Institute of Chicago.

1948 Earns MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago.

1946-1969 Teaches at the DuSable High School.

1960

1961 Co-founded the Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art, which is located on the ground floor of her South Side mansion that once housed African American railroad workers.

1968 Ebony Museum is renamed DuSable Museum of African American History after the Haitian fur trader Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable, who in the 1770s was the first permanent settler in the area that would become Chicago.

Writes and illustrates "What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black?"



COMPLEXIONS

Contemporary Ballet

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Artistic Directors

November 10 at 7:30pm
November 11 at 2:00pm

Dancing to the music of Nina Simone, Prince, White Stripes and Chopin.



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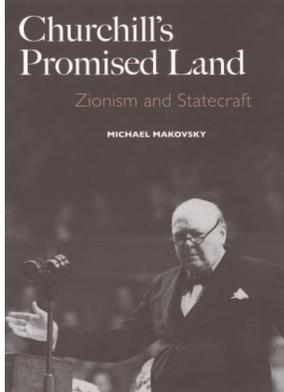
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IN PERSON: Auditorium Theatre box office,
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Author Event

Michael Makovsky

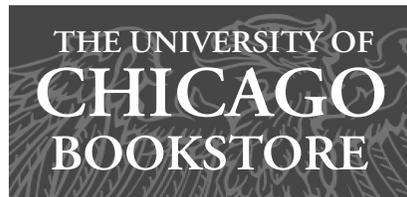
Michael Makovsky, a University of Chicago grad (BA'85), and the foreign policy director of the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, D.C., will be speaking about and signing copies of his new book:

**Churchill's Promised Land:
Zionism and Statecraft.**

Mr. Makovsky's book traces the development of Churchill's positions towards Zionism from the period leading up to World War I through his final years as prime minister in the 1950's.

This will be Mr. Makovsky's only area appearance.

Monday Nov. 5th @ 12pm



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...a remarkable legacy

of the committee. Burroughs is most well known for co-founding with her husband Charles and others the DuSable Museum of African American History, originally named The Ebony Museum of Negro History and Art, in 1961. The first and oldest African-American museum in the country got its humble start on the ground floor of Burroughs' South Side home on 39th Street, a building originally constructed as a boarding house for Blacks working for the railroad. The museum that drew 500 visitors during the first year now has more than 15,000 artifacts and books and is housed in Washington Park at 740 E. 56th Pl. The DuSable will celebrate Burroughs during a Founders Day celebration this Saturday. The event will feature video footage of the

founders, artwork, special guest storyteller Oba William King and the Washington Park Dance Group. DuSable President Antionette Wright said she hopes to also unveil a three-dimensional model of the new wing, planned for construction next year.

"So that will be the next level of the dream from 39th Street to a museum campus," said Wright.

Diana Dinkins-Carr has known Burroughs all her life, literally — Burroughs introduced her parents to each other. Dinkins-Carr is the board president and chair of the South Side Community Arts Center, 3831 S. Michigan Ave., another institution that Burroughs co-founded.

"She is one of the co-founders of the center and she was very influential back then in the 1940s and today in keeping our doors open.

She is always writing fundraising letters for us to

restore our collection, and she is on the advisory board," said Dinkins-Carr.

Dinkins-Carr said she remembers crowds of artists gathering in Burroughs' kitchen when she was just a child.

"I used to say to my parents Margaret was always begging for money for the arts and why did she do that. And now I'm always begging for money for the arts so I guess some rubbed off on me," Dinkin-Carr says with a laugh.

Burroughs told Ebony Magazine in 1993, "Every individual wants to leave a legacy; to be remembered for something positive they have done for their community."

As the last lines of her famous poem state,

"I must find the truth of heritage for myself and pass it on to them. In years to come, I believe because I have armed them with



the truth, my children and their children's children will venerate me. For it is the truth that will make us free!"

Events honoring Dr. Margaret Burroughs

Thursday, November 1
"Breakfast with Dr. Burroughs" from 9 to 11 a.m. Thursday at Pearl's Place, 3901 S. Michigan Ave. Donations are \$15 and there will be free parking next door at the Amber Inn. Contact Linda Shells at 773-955-0194 for more information.

Directly after the breakfast a motorcade will travel the historic route that goes past Burroughs' home, South Side Community Arts Center, Provident Hospital, the first hospital in Chicago and DuSable Museum of African American History in Washington Park.

Senior Luncheon will feature a poetry reading by Burroughs from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at Abbott Park Senior Satellite Center, 49 E. 95th St.

"Images in Retrospect" art exhibit of Burroughs' artwork reception at 5:30 p.m. at the Carter G. Woodson Library, 9525 S. Halsted St. The exhibit will remain open through Nov. 30. During a closing ceremony artwork and poetry by local youth at area parks, including Washington Park, will be presented to Burroughs. Time for this event is to be determined.

Saturday, November 3
"Founders Day at the DuSable Museum" from 3 to 4 p.m. at DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 E. 56th Pl. The program will feature Burroughs as a special guest to discuss all the founders of the museum with video footage and images. Tickets range from \$20 to \$200. Those who purchase a VIP ticket can attend a special reception from 4 to 5 p.m. For more information call 773-947-0600.

Note: Images of Margaret Burroughs and her work are not presented in chronological order.

What Shall I Tell My Children Who Are Black?

1970

1969-1979 Teaches in the Humanities Department at Kennedy-King College.

1973 DuSable Museum opens its doors at the current location in Washington Park, 740 E. 56th Pl.

1975 Receives the President's Humanitarian Award.



1980



1985 Mayor Harold Washington appoints Burroughs a commissioner of the Chicago Park District, a position she still holds.

February 1, 1986 Mayor Harold Washington declares "Dr. Margaret Burroughs Day"

1987 Contributes to the rediscovery of the poet Frank Marshall Davis by editing the book "Jazz Interlude."

1990 to 2007

1993 DuSable Museum opens The Harold Washington Wing, which houses a theater and additional galleries.

November 1, 2007 Celebrates her 90th birthday with events throughout the South Side of Chicago.



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