

*President's Citation*

# Centenary College of Louisiana



## *William Joyce*

WRITER, ILLUSTRATOR, DREAMER

WITH PENCIL IN HAND AND THE SEEDS OF NEW WORLDS BURIED DEEP IN YOUR IMAGINATION, YOU SET FORTH IN PURSUIT OF A VISION AND A DREAM – ONE THAT WOULD TAKE YOU FAR FROM YOUR NATIVE SHREVEPORT... AND BACK AGAIN.

THERE WERE THOSE WHO TOLD YOU YOUR WAY WAS WRONG – THAT YOUR PATH WAS NOT RIGHT. BUT WITH CONVICTION AND COURAGE, YOU CHOSE TO TURN YOUR BACK, REFUSING TO CONFORM, DARING TO PICK THE UNKNOWN RATHER THAN THE KNOWN.

YOU INHERENTLY UNDERSTAND THAT EVERY PERSON'S STORY MATTERS AND THAT YOUR PATH TO HAPPINESS IS TO GIVE THOSE STORIES VOICE. ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES, BATTLES FOUGHT, WONDERS REVEALED...MANY LANDS, MANY JOYS, MANY SORROWS – BUT STORIES ALL.

THROUGH YOUR CHARACTERS – ROBOTS, MYTHICAL CREATURES, DINOSAURS – YOU HAVE TAUGHT US THAT THERE IS NO LOVE WITHOUT HOPE, THERE IS NO WISDOM WITHOUT OPTIMISM, AND THERE IS NO POINT IN GROWING OLD IF WE LOSE OUR CHILD-LIKE WONDER AND AWE. TIME AND SPACE ARE OURS TO CONQUER IF ONLY WE LET OURSELVES PRETEND.

IN A WORLD OF DARKNESS, HATRED, AND DOUBT, YOU ARE A LIGHT. IF SOME SAY THAT YOU SEE THE WORLD THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES THEN IT IS OUR UTMOST DESIRE THAT WE SHALL FOREVER HAVE OUR OWN PAIR, TOO, SO THAT WE MAY JOIN YOU ON THE NEXT GRAND ADVENTURE.

FOR ENCOURAGING US TO BE OUR TRUEST SELVES, TO FOLLOW OUR PASSIONS AND DREAMS, TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD, CENTENARY COLLEGE IS PROUD TO BESTOW UPON YOU, *William Joyce*, THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF ARTS, HONORIS CAUSA.

*Given at Shreveport, Louisiana,  
the third day of May 2014  
and the 189th Year of the College*

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B. DAVID ROWE, PRESIDENT  
CENTENARY COLLEGE OF LOUISIANA

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*Yusef Komunyakaa*

SOLDIER, POET, EDUCATOR

BORN OF THE SOUTH, YOU WITNESSED FIRSTHAND THE STRIFE AND TEARS BLED FROM THOSE WHO FOUGHT TO INSTILL FREEDOMS THAT WERE DENIED THEM FOR FAR TOO LONG.

AMID DESTRUCTION AND CHAOS A MILLION MILES FROM HOME, YOU CHOSE TO SPEAK LIFE INTO THE SOLDIER'S LAMENT. YOU WERE AND ARE A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS.

DIGGING DEEP INTO THE DARKNESS OF OUR SOULS, WITH EVERY RHYTHM – EVERY BEAT – YOU SPEAK OF A PAIN, WHICH WE CAN NEITHER ADMIT NOR EXPRESS, AND YET, IN READING IT, WE KNOW (YOU TELL US) THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE.

YOU HAVE COMMITTED YOURSELF TO HELPING OTHERS – EDUCATING OUR YOUTH – SO THAT THEY CAN FIND THEIR OWN WORDS AND SPEAK THEIR OWN TRUTH OF WHAT WAS, WHAT IS, AND WHAT WILL BE.

YOU HAVE SEEN THE UN-SEEABLE. HEARD THE UN-HEARABLE. LIVED THE UNLIVABLE. ENDURED THE UNENDURABLE.

IN YOUR DISTILLED INSINUATIONS, WE FIND, WE KNOW, WHAT IT IS TO BE HUMAN, TO LIVE, TO BE... TO BREATHE. WE ARE STONE. WE ARE FLESH.

FOR SHINING LIGHT ON THE FRAGILITY AND ACHING BEAUTY – THAT CATCH IN YOUR THROAT – THAT IS OUR ONE AND ONLY LIFE, CENTENARY COLLEGE IS PROUD TO BESTOW UPON YOU, *Yusef Komunyakaa*, THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF FINE ARTS, HONORIS CAUSA.

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the third day of May 2014  
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