

American MASTERS

thirteen
WNET NEW YORK

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press information



PBS

AMERICAN MASTERS
is produced for PBS
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Production Bios

AMERICAN MASTERS Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun

KRISTY ANDERSEN

Producer, Writer

Kristy Andersen began researching Zora Neale Hurston's life in 1991 after receiving a grant from the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs. She broadened her research to eight other states after receiving Humanities Council grants from Alabama, South Carolina, Louisiana, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Tennessee, North Carolina, and New York. Hurston's life story began to take shape as Andersen's research revealed many details that had been obscured, including documentation of Hurston's birthplace in Notasulga, Alabama, and a marriage certificate for Hurston's third marriage in Daytona Beach in 1940.

Andersen worked with staff at the Library of Congress to locate and identify a cache of film footage that Hurston shot in South Carolina, hidden away in boxes since 1940. In 1999 Andersen's discovery of Folk Tales from the Gulf States in the Smithsonian's computer files lead to *Every Tongue Got to Confess*, the first new book by Zora Neale Hurston since 1948. Andersen interviewed countless people over the years who knew Zora Neale Hurston, and who divulged their intimacy on many levels to help bring to this film a true picture of one of America's great talents.

Andersen has worked in film and broadcast production since 1974 at television stations in the Tampa Bay area, C-SPAN and the House of Representatives Recording Studio in Washington, D.C. After producing the award-winning *Bay Bottom Blues*, a documentary about the demise of sea grass in Tampa Bay, she began producing environmental programs independently in 1985. She received an Emmy Award from the Miami chapter of NATAS for her 1989 documentary film, *Sea Turtles Last Dance*, about the endangered Kemp's Ridley turtle. The film later was broadcast nationwide on PBS. In addition to broadcast work, her short films can be seen in museums and tourism venues in the Tampa Bay area. Her production company is Bay Bottom News.

SAM POLLARD

Director

Sam Pollard's professional accomplishments as a documentary producer/director and editor of feature films, television and video span almost thirty years. His first assignment as a documentary producer came in 1989 for Henry Hampton's *Blackside* production, *Eyes On The Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads*. For one of his episodes in this series, he received an Emmy Award. Eight years later, he

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returned to Blackside as Co-Executive Producer/Producer of Hampton's last documentary series, I'll Make Me A World: Stories of African-American Artists and Community, for which Pollard received a Peabody Award. In 2002, he received another Peabody Award as one of the producers of the PBS series The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow.

Between 1990 and 2006, Pollard edited a number of Spike Lee's films: Mo' Better Blues, Jungle Fever, Girl, Clockers, and Bamboozled, and worked as an additional editor on 25th Hour and Inside Man. Pollard and Lee also co-produced a number of documentary productions for the small and big screen: Spike Lee Presents Mike Tyson, a biographical sketch for HBO for which Pollard received an Emmy; Four Little Girls, a feature-length documentary about the 1965 Birmingham church bombings, which was nominated for an Academy Award; Jim Brown All-American, a two-hour profile of the acclaimed football player, actor and activist; and most recently, When The Levees Broke, a four-part special for HBO about the impact and after-effects of Hurricane Katrina on the city of New Orleans. The film won a number of awards including three Emmys (one for Best Editing), a Peabody Award, the George Polk Award, the NAACP Image Award, and the Pare Lorentz Award from the International Documentary Association, as well as two awards from the 2006 Venice Film Festival.

Pollard began this journey in 1972 as an apprentice in a Thirteen/WNET-sponsored film-training workshop. Under the tutelage of a number of veterans in independent filmmaking, he spent the remainder of the 1970s polishing his editing skills on everything from celebrity profiles to Dateline: Israel, a film series about the history of Jerusalem. His feature experience as an editor started in the mid-1970s with films like Just Crazy About Horses, Body and Soul, Private Resort, and Style Wars. In between films, throughout the 1980s, he edited for the highly-acclaimed children's programs Vegetable Soup (NBC) and 3-2-1-Contact (The Children's Television Workshop), for which he received two Emmys. In the early 1990s, he edited Fires In The Mirror, a performance art film directed by George Wolfe and starring Anna Deavere Smith. In 1993, he produced an American Experience documentary for PBS called Goin' Back to T-Town, about life in a black community in Tulsa, Oklahoma during legal segregation. Pollard is a Professor of Film Studies at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts.

KIM BROCKINGTON

Actress

Kim Brockington starred in Zora, a one-woman show, at American Place Theater, Library of Congress, and The Kennedy Center. In **AMERICAN MASTERS Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun**, she portrays Hurston in dramatic re-enactments of the celebrated writer's 1943 radio interview on WEAJ in New York with Mary Margaret McBride.

Most recently, Brockington completed a recurring role on One Life To Live as Mrs. Woodrow and appeared in the national tour of Doubt.

Her work in off-Broadway and regional theaters includes Wanda Dean in Holiday Heart, Darlene in In Walks Ed, Woman #2 in From the Mississippi Delta, Sura Rise in Dark Paradise at Cincinnati Playhouse, Lucy in The America Play, Glory in Thunder Knocking on the Door at Yale Rep, Labrea Mosley in Venice at Crossroads Theater, Hannah in Letters From a New England Negro, Christmas Present in A Christmas Carol at The McCarter Theater, and Fannie Mae Dove in Flyin' West at Alabama Shakespeare Fest.

Her television credits include Felicia on *Guiding Light* (three seasons), Lila on *All My Children* and Laurie on *Whoopi*. She played Agent Pam Thayer on *West Wing*, Josette Dobbs on *Law and Order*, Retta Hawkins on *Hate* (pilot starring Marsha Gaye Hardin), and Connie Wilson on *Third Watch*. Her film credits include Mrs. Greene in *School of Rock*, Della in *Love Songs* (opposite Lou Gossett, Jr.), Sarah in *Dirty Laundry*, Martha in *The Red Right Hand*, and roles in *Crossfire* and *Rock The Paint*.

Brockington is a graduate of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts and also studied with Susan Batson and Lloyd Richards.

SUSAN LACY

Series Creator and Executive Producer

Susan Lacy has been an award-winning originator of primetime public television programs since 1979. As the creator and executive producer of **AMERICAN MASTERS**, she has been responsible for the production and national broadcast of more than 150 documentary films about our country's artistic and cultural giants, those who have made an indelible impact on the American landscape. Now in its 22nd season on PBS, **AMERICAN MASTERS** has garnered unprecedented awards and is consistently recognized by television critics as "the best biographical series ever to appear on American television."

In addition to her producing role, Lacy is an award-winning filmmaker. Her 2004 *Judy Garland: By Myself* earned her an Emmy Award for writing and an Emmy nomination for directing. She wrote, directed and produced *Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart and Mind* (IDA nomination for Outstanding Documentary) and *Leonard Bernstein: Reaching for the Note* (Emmy Award and DGA nomination). She produced the Peabody Award-winning *Paul Simon: Born at the Right Time*, directed and produced *Rod Serling: Submitted for Your Approval*, directed and produced *Lena Horne: In Her Own Voice*, and was one of the producers on the widely acclaimed *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan* - all for **AMERICAN MASTERS**.

Under her leadership, **AMERICAN MASTERS** received the Primetime Emmy for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, and 2004 as well as 15 other Primetime Emmy awards in various craft categories. Lacy is also the recipient of five Primetime Emmys for *Lillian Gish: The Actor's Life for Me*, *Broadway's Dreamers: The Legacy of The Group Theater*, *Unknown Chaplin*, *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*, and *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*. In addition to eight Peabody awards for *John Hammond: From Bessie Smith to Bruce Springsteen*, *Unknown Chaplin*, *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*, *Paul Simon: Born at the Right Time*, *Alexander Calder*, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: Winter Dreams*, *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, and *Andy Warhol: A Documentary Film*, she received Grammy awards for *Lou Reed: Rock and Roll Heart* and *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, and 35 additional Emmy nominations and three Oscar nominations. *No Direction Home* was also honored with the 2007 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award for excellence in broadcast journalism.

Lacy's career in public television began in 1979, as deputy director of performance programs at Thirteen/WNET New York. She was senior program executive for **GREAT PERFORMANCES** and worked as director of program development with **THE AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE**, where she was a founding member. Lacy then ran the east coast office of Robert Redford's Sundance Institute from 1984 to 1987. She was a consulting producer at Time-Life Video during the launch

of Time-Warner's new initiatives in long-form documentary production. Lacy also led programs at both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Lacy was one of the select 2005 honorees at the Museum of Television & Radio's "She Made It" event, which recognized 50 exceptional women who have made an indelible impact on the media landscape. She serves on the board of governors of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, on the board of the Film Forum and is a trustee of the Independent Documentary Association. Lacy is a member of the Directors Guild of America, the Writers Guild of America, the Independent Features Project, and New York Women in Film & Television. She has a B.A. in American Studies from the University of Virginia, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and an M.A. in American Studies from George Washington University. She was a Graduate Teaching Fellow and a Smithsonian Fellow, and completed a residency at the American Academy in Rome. In 1994, she was awarded an honorary doctorate from Long Island University and in 1996, she was named Distinguished Alumnus of the Year at Mary Washington College, the women's college of the University of Virginia.