

CONVOCATION TO FEATURE NOTED AUTHOR AND MUSICIAN



James McBride, award-winning writer, composer and saxophonist, will headline Valparaiso University's 2010 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, as the keynote speaker at a Jan. 18 convocation set for 10 a.m. in the Chapel of the Resurrection. McBride will speak to this year's MLK Celebration theme, "Dream with a Beat: Sing, Celebrate and Serve," which was chosen to honor the power of music and the arts to unite and uplift communities past, present and future, empowering them to make positive social change. After the convocation, McBride will attend a luncheon and participate in a question and answer session. McBride's memoir, "The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother," is a modern American classic read in colleges and high schools across the country. Valpo's first-year CORE students are reading the New York Times bestseller as the last text of the fall semester in a study unit about love.

The book is a moving account of McBride's mother, a white Jewish woman from Poland who raised 12 black children in New York City and sent each to college. The memoir has been translated into more than 17 languages, sold more than 2.1 million copies worldwide and is a perennial favorite of book clubs. McBride's second book, "Miracle at St. Anna," the story of a black American soldier who befriends an Italian boy during World War II, was dubbed a "searingly, soaringly beautiful novel" by The Baltimore Sun. The book became a major motion picture, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Spike Lee, and will be screened at 7 p.m. on Jan. 17 as part of [Valpo's 2010 MLK Celebration](#). The screening at Neils Science Center

MLK Celebration 2010 Speakers-Valparaiso University
on campus is free and open to the public. McBride's latest book, "Song Yet Sung," a national bestseller about slaves and slave catchers on Maryland's eastern shore, is the 2009 choice of the Maryland Humanities Council's "One Book/One Maryland" program. A former staff writer for The Boston Globe, People and The Washington Post, McBride's work has appeared in numerous publications, including The New York Times and Rolling Stone. He covered Michael Jackson exclusively for People during Jackson's 1984 Victory Tour, at the height of Jackson's popularity. McBride received the 1997 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award as well as several awards for his work as a composer in musical theatre, including the American Arts and Letters Richard Rodgers Award, the ASCAP Richard Rodgers Horizons Award and the American Music Theatre Festival's Stephen Sondheim Award. He has written songs for Anita Baker, Grover Washington Jr., Gary Burton, Silver Burdett Music Textbooks and for the PBS television character Barney. McBride studied composition at Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He holds a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University and several honorary doctorates. Currently a distinguished writer-in-residence at New York University, McBride also performs regularly with his colorful jazz band, highlighting his amusing stories of redemption, forgiveness and identity with wonderful musical accompaniment.

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