

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Everybody Loves Thelma & A Good Time Premier Art Exhibit featuring Darrin Keith Bastfield

Baltimore, Maryland – A unique experience is coming to Baltimore: a merging of art, fashion and culture entitled Everybody Loves Thelma & A Good Time, presented by Eubie Blake Cultural Center during Women's History Month, March 8 to 29, 2008.

When we reflect on African American female cultural symbols of beauty, we often relegate them to a time period, and no longer perceive them as relevant. Few have transcended this as a continuing legacy of such cultural power and resilience. We still sit at the feet of elder women like Lena Horne and Diahann Carroll, and those in subsequent generations like Pam Grier and Angela Bassett.

Bern Nadette Stanis represents a part of that great legacy, both in beauty and stature. She captured the imagination of a marginalized Black America and shined in ways that were unheard of a decade prior. Against the backdrop of the ghetto in the television hit Good Times, which ran from 1974 to 1979, Stanis as Thelma displayed the devastating combination of beauty, intelligence, and self-pride. Her screen presence won over television audiences across all boundaries and helped to redefine what is black womanhood.

With no exceptions, Stanis projected through her character, Thelma, that woman, particularly black women, as Sweet Honey in the Rock sang, "should be a priority." She stood more than an adolescent black female. She was a principled second matriarch to the Evans family. She exuded a grace and dignity unparalleled in television sitcoms during the 70's. In fact, some could argue that few adolescent females since that time were portrayed that brilliant.

On March 8, 2008, in celebration of Women's History Month, Stanis is teaming up with artist Darrin Keith Bastfield, curator of the Eubie Blake Gallery, to premier Everybody Loves Thelma & A Good Time Art Exhibition, a cultural explosion of art, fashion and the literary arts. The exhibition will feature paintings, drawings, installations, and photography with multicultural models portraying the character Thelma, all created by Bastfield.

"We have to honor our cultural icons while they are living," said Bastfield, in talking about the showcase of Stanis's work and her legacy.

The Official Art Opening and Reception Saturday, March 8, 2008 will take place at the Eubie Black Cultural Center located at 847 N. Howard Street, where Stanis will speak about her experiences on the set of Good Times and how the show impacted her life, as well as her ongoing work, with a book singing of her nonfiction text on relationships entitled, Situations 101 and other authored books. An additional activity includes a panel discussion of The Image of the African American Female in the Media and the Arts. The opening reception is from 11AM to 2PM and is free and open to the public.

This exhibition is supported by a grant from the **William G. Baker Jr. Memorial Fund**.

The evening of March 8, 2008, from 8PM to 1AM Stanis and Bastfield will host a 70's Celebration Gala with a portion of the proceeds goes to benefit the Eubie Blake Gifted and Talented Scholarship Program. For ticket information visit www.everybodylovesthelma.com.

The Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

No admission charge; however, donations accepted.

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For more than three decades, the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center has sought to bring creative expression and urban consciousness to Baltimore through visual and performing arts education and development opportunities for children, youth and adults in our community.