



*Schedule of Activities for 2013 Frank X Walker Residency*

*"Voices from Affrilachia:*

*The Poetry and Storytelling of Frank X Walker"*

◆ **September 23-October 18, 2013:** Photographic Art Exhibit, *Anthology of Appalachian Writers*, Gretchen Moran Laskas Volume V, Scarborough Library Reading Room.

◆ **Monday, September 23:**

- 1) Storer College: A Community Remembers, 5:00 p.m., Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies;
- 2) Screening of Film *Coal Black Voices* and Discussion, 7:00 p.m. Reynolds Hall, co-sponsored with the Shepherdstown Film Society, Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt Discussion Leader.

◆ **Tuesday, September 24:**

- 1) "The African American Story in Appalachia with Dr. Matthew Foulds," 5:00 p.m. Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies;
- 2) "A Celebration of Appalachian Storytellers: *Anthology of Appalachian Writers and Photographers*, Gretchen Moran Laskas Volume V," 7:00 p.m., Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies, Anthology Reception in Scarborough Reading Room at 8:00 p.m. Gretchen Moran Laskas will join us for the event sponsored by the WV Center for the Book, the Shepherd University Foundation, and the Scarborough Library.

◆ **Wednesday, September 25:**

- 1) Visit with Martinsburg Honors Students at Martinsburg High School, 9:00 a.m.;
- 2) Frank X Walker Reading at Martinsburg Public Library and Reception, 10:30 a.m.;
- 3) Lunch with AHWIR Project Director and Friends;
- 4) "The Writing Life, with Frank X Walker," 7:00 p.m., Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies. The writer discusses his work, the writing process, and his journey toward authorship and publication.

◆ **Thursday, September 26:**

- 1) Lunch with Senior Moments Book Club;
- 2) Writers Master Class with Frank X Walker, 3:00-4:30 p.m. at Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies;
- 3) Dinner at Yellow Brick Bank with Fiction Competition Winners, 6:00 p.m.;
- 4) Scarborough Society Lecture and WV Humanities Council Awards Ceremony, "Voices from Affrilachia," 8:00 p.m. Walker will receive the Appalachian Heritage Writer's Award and presents the Scarborough Address at Erma Byrd Hall, followed by reception and book signing. The WV Fiction Competition awards will also be presented by Walker. The event is sponsored by the WV Humanities Council and the WV Center for the Book.

◆ **Friday, September 27:** Evening Reading of WV Fiction Competition winner, at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Appalachian Heritage Festival Concert, 8:00 p.m. Frank.

◆ **Saturday, September 28:** Appalachian Heritage Day-long Festival and 8:00 p.m. Concert, Frank.

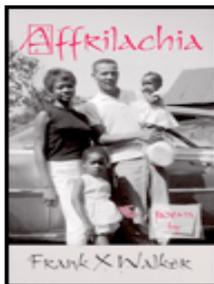
◆ **Tuesday, October 29:** "Appalachian Haints and Hauntings," with Storyteller Lyn Ford, 7:00 p.m. Byrd Legislative Center. The event co-sponsored by the WV Humanities Council and Shepherd University Diversity and Equity Committee.

◆ **Friday, November 22:** Screening and Discussion of *Red Tails*, the Story of the Tuskegee Airmen, Discussion Leader Dr. Matthew Foulds, 7:00 p.m. Reynolds Hall. The event is sponsored by the Shepherdstown Film Society.



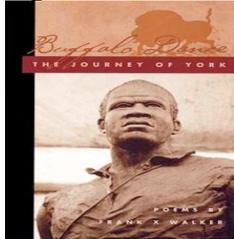
Kentucky's Poet Laureate, Director of the African American and Africana Studies Program at the University of Kentucky, and editor of *PLUCK!*, the *New Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*, **Frank X Walker** is author of *When Winter Come*, *Black Box*, *Buffalo Dance: the Journey of York, Affrilachia*, and *Isaac Murphy* among others. Walker coined the term "Affrilachia" in 1991, in an effort to make Appalachian literary studies more inclusive—understanding, as do we all, that seizing the language (and telling one's own story) is the first step in wresting one's identity and true independence. Walker was born on June 11, 1961 in Danville, Kentucky, second of ten children, cultivated lovingly by Faith and Frank Walker, Senior. Walker recalls in the *This I Remember* volume a devoted mother whose creativity touched every aspect of her family's life, from her creative cooking that could turn "a single potato" into a family feast to her creative sewing that could turn cloth scraps into charming dolls or create a prom or wedding dress for his sisters: "I always knew," Walker writes, "when she was making something, because she'd be singing or humming, . . . [as she did] all the way through her home correspondence courses in floral design and interior decorating." A first generation college student, Walker found his way into one of Gurney Norman's classes and afterward developed a passion for literature and writing. After receiving his degree from the University of Kentucky, Walker worked in various arts administrative jobs, eventually finishing his MFA at Spalding University so that he could teach on the university level. Walker's documentary *Coal Black Voices* was greeted with critical acclaim and won the Jesse Stuart Award in 2003.

After receiving a prestigious Lannan Fellowship for Poetry in 2005, Walker was able to concentrate on his writing and other creative projects. He is recipient of two honorary doctorates, has served on a variety of boards such as the Kentucky Humanities Council, Appalshop, and the Hindeman Settlement School. He is recipient of an AI Smith Fellowship, the 2006 Thomas D. Clark Literary Award for Excellence, and has seen three of his books, *Affrilachia*, *When Winter Come*, and *Isaac Murphy*, turned in plays and performed throughout the country. Walker's *Buffalo Dance* was winner of the Lillian Smith Book Award, and *Affrilachia* was a Kentucky Public Librarians Choice Award nominee. **Walker will serve throughout 2013 as Shepherd University's Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence and be on campus September 23-27, 2013, to receive the Appalachian Heritage Writer's Award, funded by the WV Humanities Council and the WV Center for the Book.** Walker's *Affrilachia* will be the 2013 One Book, One West Virginia read, selected by the WV Center for the Book. Frank X Walker will be the focus of the 2013 *Anthology of Appalachian Writers, Frank X Walker Volume VI*, published in 2014.

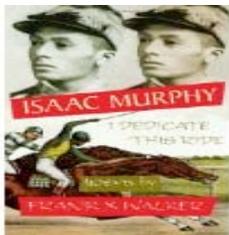


*Affrilachia* (2000) is a ground-breaking book that, as Gurney Norman writes, "illuminates a vast cultural landscape." In adding a new word to the English language, Walker provided us with a fresh concept of what it means to be Appalachian, a condition that

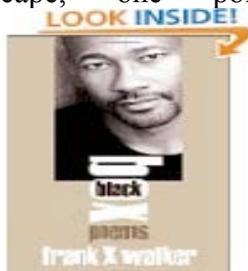
transcends race, revealing a sense of both kinship and place. As Norman writes, “In *Affrilachia*, Frank startled the world with his poetic assertion that in the twenty-first century, many African American people have regional identity and place-based consciousness that is inextricable from their racial identities,” or, as Walker writes himself, “some of the bluegrass is black.” *Affrilachia*, published by Cove Press, provides a voice to those “Appalachians,” who like the Cherokee, complete the rainbow that is as Appalachian as the Scot-Irish we too often limit the region to.



*Buffalo Dance, the Journey of York* (2004) and *When Winter Come, the Ascension of York* (2008) portray the remarkable story of the African American explorer who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their famous 1803 expedition, an event that would open the western territory which Jefferson had added to the geography of the nation. The two books provide an extraordinary example of storytelling at its best, and they allow an unheard voice to tell another side to one of the country’s most iconic stories, a story which shaped a nation and the national identity. In the process, Walker strips away the veneer from the myth, to lay bare an alternative perspective which will help us all come to terms with the story of America. York, the African American man-servant of William Clark, shares his story that becomes everyone’s story, in a country uniquely diverse and that can only succeed through embracing its rich diversity.



*Isaac Murphy, I Dedicate This Ride* (2010) reveals another extraordinary American voice: three-time Kentucky Derby winner and one of the most winning jockeys ever to wear racing silks, Isaac Burns Murphy (1861-1896). Murphy was son of a slave, who by the grit of his perseverance and the talent and wisdom that comes only to the most accomplished of “horse whisperers,” became a legend on the track. The uniquely Affrilachian collection *Black Box* (2006) provides an array of forgotten and seldom heard voices, many from Walker’s own coming of age, that complete a chorus of both an Appalachian and an American landscape, one poignantly provided through Walker’s extraordinary verse.



Walker’s latest book, *Turn Me Loose* (2013), is a portrayal of the Medgar Evers’ story.