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Twin Cities Northside resident and Master Storyteller, Nothando Zulu has been invited to perform her storytelling magic at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC June 24 through July 5th. The Smithsonian is the world's largest museum complex and research organization composed of 19 museums, 9 research centers, and the National Zoo.

Zulu will tell stories during the 2009 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, “Giving Voice: The Power of Words in African American Culture”. The program explores and celebrates the role that African American oral traditions have played in the shaping of American culture. This program is sponsored by the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Mr. Lonnie G. Bunch III, the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture says, “Words have the power to connect people, to convey ideas, to give comfort, to make us laugh and to call us to action”. Our recent Presidential election is one of the best examples of the truth of this.

The Folklife Festival starts Wednesday, June 24, through Sunday, June 28, and Wednesday, July 1, through Sunday, July 5. All of the events are outdoors on the National Mall. Festival hours are from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. each day, with special evening events beginning at 6 p.m.

Zulu proudly adds the Smithsonian to her list of storytelling sites that include Cape Town, South Africa; Accra, Ghana; St, Thomas US Virgin Islands and throughout the continental United States. Says Zulu: “I am truly honored to be a part of this particular festival. I am truly excited to have the opportunity to work on the sets that include re-creations of a barbershop, a beauty shop, a porch stoop and a radio station – all in the African American spirit!”

She adds that she is happy to be in the company of legendary Master Storytellers like Baba Jamal Koram, Charlotte Blake-Alston, Valerie Tutson and Mitch Capel aka “Gran Daddy 'JuneBug” - especially since Baba Jamal, Valerie and “Gran Daddy” have all been featured tellers for the Annual Black Master Storytellers Festival, “Signifyin’ & Testifyin’” that she co-produces in the Twin Cities.

Zulu is the President of Black Storytellers Alliance that presents the Annual three-day festival “Signifyin’ & Testifyin’” - now in the 18th year of production.

So, if you’re unable to attend the events in DC, make sure that you mark your calendars for September 24-26, 2009, to celebrate the 18th Annual Black Master Storytellers Festival here in the Twin Cities. All events are free, family-friendly and open to the public.