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GVSU AWARDED \$15,000 FOR FILM ON MUSKEGON'S *Up from the Bottoms*

(MUSKEGON)-----Today, the Michigan Humanities Council (MHC) awarded a grant of \$15,000 to Grand Valley State University for the project, *Up from the Bottoms: African-American Migration to Muskegon, Michigan*. The award was part of the MHC's *Michigan People, Michigan Places ... Our Stories, Our Lives* program, which supports community collaboration for public humanities programs. The presentation occurred at the MAREC building in Muskegon.

"This project will help capture the history of the African American community in Muskegon, a story that needs to be shared with all citizens," stated Jan Fedewa, executive director of the Michigan Humanities Council. "The Michigan Humanities Council is pleased to support Grand Valley State University's efforts to engage students to collect the oral histories for a documentary film about this migration which helped define the community and its people."

The project will produce a 45-55 minute documentary film on the history of African American migration to Muskegon; in particular, the settling of "the Bottoms" area from the 1940s through the 1960s. The film will feature the history of a group of people who helped to shape that community and its culture, including how black businesses flourished out of the homes of residents and the popularity of the jazz clubs that drew people in from all areas. Another focus will be exploring the racial climate of that time period and the struggles this group experienced during the settling of "The Bottoms." A middle and high school social studies curriculum with companion materials will be designed around the documentary for use in schools. A community premier in Muskegon and at Grand Valley State University of the finished documentary is also scheduled to take place in November 2008.

Collaborating organizations on this project include the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District, Institute for Healing Racism, Muskegon County Museum, the Muskegon Chronicle, the Regional Education Media Center, and MIstreamnet.

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“The amount of support we have received from the community and the sponsoring organizations has been overwhelming,” said Jim Schaub, *Up from the Bottoms* project director. “As we talk to more and more residents who migrated during this time, our appreciation for the importance of preserving this history keeps growing. We and the community are very grateful for the support we have received from Grand Valley State University and the Michigan Humanities Council in getting this project off the ground.”

“This Michigan Humanities Council grant will help to illuminate the rich history of ‘the Bottoms’ and the culture that grew around that unique community,” said United States Senator Carl Levin. “I am happy to support Grand Valley State University’s efforts to record this local history for area students and future generations.”

The Michigan Humanities Council, founded in 1974, is a private, non-profit organization, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities. For additional information on the Michigan Humanities Council, please visit: www.michiganhumanities.org or call 517-372-7770.

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