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**Duke University, Nordstrom And Smithsonian Institution Highlight Photography
Of Griffith Jerome Davis In Exhibitions Across The Country**

Griffith Jerome Davis observed life from many angles: as the First Roving Editor for Ebony Magazine; as an international freelance photojournalist for Black Star, New York Times, Fortune, Der Spiegel and Time; and as a pioneer in the formation of U.S. President Harry Truman's Point 4 program for foreign aid, the forerunner of the present-day United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Throughout his career, he used the art of photography as his form of activism.

Three separate exhibitions of the work of Griffith Jerome Davis are being shown across the United States of America:

- ***Photo by Griff Davis***, mounted by the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at **Duke University** in Durham, North Carolina in collaboration with the John Hope Franklin Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies, reveals the broad 40 year spectrum of Davis' work from playing the paparazzi at Nat King Cole's honeymoon in Mexico, to collaborating with Langston Hughes on photo-documentary stories, to covering the inauguration of President William V.S. Tubman of Liberia in the early 1950s. The exhibit will open in the hallway gallery of Perkins Library from January 14 to March 31st. The gallery is accessible Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 919-660-5968.
- **Nordstrom** Department Store is showcasing the work of 10 renowned and up and coming African-American photographers in a premiere exhibit called ***Love Now*** that will be displayed in its stores in 17 cities during the entire month of February. Three photographs of Griffith J. Davis taken in Liberia in the 1950s are a part of the exhibit including one of Ghana's Prime Minister-elect Kwame Nkrumah. The exhibit locations are: Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; San Francisco, San Diego, Costa Mesa, Brea, Redondo Beach, California; Arlington, Virginia; Chicago, Illinois; Indianapolis, Indiana; Dallas, Texas; Atlanta, Georgia; Durham, North Carolina; and Paramus, New Jersey. In conjunction with the exhibit, three Nordstrom stores will also participate in events benefiting local African-American organizations. Nordstrom in downtown Seattle and Portland are participating sponsors for a Maya Angelou reading at

local theatres. For more information, please contact Deniz Anders at 206-373-3034.

- **Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibit *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers, 1840 to the Present*** curated by Deborah Willis. This gathering of images provides a sparkling harvest of the works of African American photographers whose work spans time, geography, subject matter and technique. Five photographs of Griffith J. Davis are a part of the **Art and Activism** section including ones of former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and missionary Albert Schweitzer. The exhibit first opened at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. in February 2000 and has since been shown in a variety of cities across the United States. It will be shown from January 16th until April 20, 2003 at the Frist Center for Visual Arts in **Nashville, Tennessee** and will continue to the **Oakland (California)** Museum of Art from June 7 to August 31, 2003 and the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College in **Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts** from October 11 to December 7, 2003. For more information, please contact Sandy Choi of Curatorial Assistance at 626-577-9696.

Born in 1923 on the campus of Morehouse College in segregated Atlanta, Georgia, he grew up across the street on the campus of Spelman College where he was able to meet and photograph the major figures of the day such as Mary McLeod Bethune, Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson for the Atlanta Daily World. After serving in World War II, he returned to Morehouse College to receive a B.A. under the influence of his mentor President Benjamin Mays. After graduating in 1947, he started working for John Johnson at Ebony Magazine at the recommendation of his former teacher Langston Hughes. In 1948, he attended Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism as the only black student in his class and received his M.A. while living at the Harlem home of Langston Hughes.

Inspired by the evolving independence movement in Africa, Griff Davis first went to Ethiopia to do a cover story on Emperor Haile Selassie for Ebony. Since Liberia was the only other independent African country at that time, he took on freelance assignments there for a variety of international publications that included the Saturday Evening Post until he joined the U.S. Foreign Service. Griff Davis worked in many capacities in the U.S. Agency for International Development from 1952 to 1985. As an advisor to African governments such as Liberia, Tunisia, and Nigeria and for USAID's Bureau for Africa and Bureau for Population and Humanitarian Assistance, he had the fortuitous opportunity to both document in still photographs and motion pictures the life and activities of the many African governments and influence their development policies in the communications, education, population and economic development arenas during his professional lifespan.

In Liberia (1952-1957) and Tunisia (195-1962), he assisted the Governments in establishing their Ministries of Information and Broadcasting. Among his many contributions, Griff Davis donated 7,000 photographs and negatives documenting social and economic development in Liberia to Howard University, and 354 historic photographic exposures of Langston Hughes and others to Duke University. He retired as a Senior Foreign Service Officer in 1985 and died on July 22, 1993.

Summarizing his life, Griff Davis said, “I’m just an observer of life. An observer of how people act and how people work. I have tried to live a life that would be a positive influence, but influence occurs in trickles, not in downpours.”

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