

Photos by GRIFF DAVIS

PO Box 360, NY, NY 10044

212.980.6250

fotobygriffdavis@aol.com

www.griffdavis.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2003

PHOTOS BY GRIFF DAVIS PRESENTS LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE AFRICAN DIASPORA EXHIBIT AT CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS 33RD ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE WEEKEND, SEPTEMBER 24 – 27, 2003, AT CONVENTION CENTER IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

A composite of the lifelong photography of the late photojournalist and U.S. Foreign Service Officer Griffith Davis is being exhibited as part of the Congressional Black Caucus 33rd Legislative Weekend outside of Hall D in the Main Hallway of the Exhibition Center at 801 Mt. Vernon Place, N.W. in Washington, D.C. from September 24 – 27, 2003. The categories of photography on exhibit are:

- Historic Photography of U.S. Civil Rights Movement
- Independence Movement in Africa
- Liberia during President William V.S. Tubman Era
- USAID Development Projects in North and Sub-Saharan Africa
- African American Life in Segregated Atlanta, Georgia
- Spelman College, Morehouse College
- Assortment of African American Artists: Langston Hughes, Arna Bontemps and Sidney Poitier

Mr. Davis was the first roving editor for Ebony magazine and joined the U.S. Foreign Service in Liberia at the inception of Africa's Independence Movement. Born on the campus of Morehouse College and growing up on the campus of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Davis graduated from Morehouse College in 1949 after having served in the 92d infantry Division in Italy during World War II. Having learned photography at Atlanta University Laboratory High School, Griff Davis shot for various publications including the Atlanta Daily World, Time and Ebony while still in school. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a fellow Morehouse student in the mid-1940s and Langston Hughes was one of Davis' principal professors who became a lifelong friend and significant influence in his life.

Griff Davis's photography provided access to many of the political, cultural and economic players of the time who came to speak, lecture and teach in Atlanta. These contacts and friendships helped shape Davis, along with the personal and professional guidance of Dr. Benjamin Mays, President of Morehouse College.

Upon graduation in 1947, Griff Davis became Ebony's first Roving Editor which gave him the freedom to write and photograph his own articles. In 1948, he left Ebony to attend Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. His

application included recommendations from Langston Hughes and Benjamin Mays. He was the only black student in his class and received his M.A. in 1949. While attending graduate school, he rented a room in Langston Hughes' brownstone at 20 East 127th Street in Harlem.

After graduating from Columbia University, Griff Davis worked as a photo-journalist for Black Star, a New York stock photo agency, from 1949 to 1952. As a freelance photojournalist for Black Star and stringer for the New York Times, he photographed and wrote extensively in Africa, Europe, and the United States. His work appeared in such various publications as Der Spiegel, Ebony, Fortune, Modern Photography, Negro Digest, Steelways and Time.

In the early 1950s, Griff Davis and fellow Morehouse alumni, John W. Davis and Robert Kitchen joined the U.S. Foreign Service, becoming pioneers of President Harry Truman's Point 4 Program for foreign aid, the forerunner of the present-day United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Their efforts in Liberia helped to establish the Point 4 program worldwide.

Griff Davis worked in many capacities in the Foreign Service for USAID from 1952 to 1985. He served in Liberia, Tunisia and Nigeria before returning to the States to assume direction of the Information, Education and Communications branch of the Office of Population at USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C. Griffith Davis was a co-founder of The Thursday Luncheon Group, an organization monitoring and promoting the recruitment, promotion and employee rights of African American Foreign Service Officers. He retired from the U.S. government in 1985 after suing them for racism, sexism and ageism.

On February 20, 1993, Morehouse College awarded Griff Davis the Bennie Trailblazer Award for personal and professional achievements at the Fifth Annual Bennie and Candle Awards Ceremony in Atlanta. The Bennie Award is named after Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, president Emeritus of Morehouse College.

"I'm not a philosopher, nor am I a deep thinker," said Griff Davis at the time. "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."

Photos by Griff Davis is a family owned company dedicated to highlighting the historical significance worldwide of the breadth of photography done by Griffith J. Davis and using it as a way to inspire others to take the road less traveled in their lives.

Given Mr. Davis's three careers as a photographer, journalist and U.S. Foreign Service Officer until his death in 1993, the intertwining of perspectives as a Native Atlantan growing up on the campuses of Spelman College and Morehouse College in segregated Atlanta and applying that understanding and set of communications skills to developmental issues in Africa provides a unique platform for exhibits, lectures and commercial activities.

Dorothy Davis, President of *Photos by Griff Davis*, is the daughter of Griff Davis. She was born in Monrovia, Liberia and grew up in Tunisia, Nigeria and Switzerland as a result of her father's work as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer. Following in her father's footsteps as a communications professional and world citizen, Ms. Davis is a pathfinder in the field of international public affairs and special events. Her multi-cultural consulting firm, *The Diasporan Touch*, is an extension of her commitment to use these vehicles to build bridges between people, cultures and interests worldwide. The firm's client list includes the Executive Office of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, World Health Organization, The Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS in Africa, Shared Interest, Danny Glover, RCN Entertainment, Black AIDS Institute, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, and UN Works website.

Prior to the creation of *The Diasporan Touch*, Ms. Davis designed, launched and became the Manager of the Goodwill Ambassador Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) featuring actor Danny Glover of the U.S.A., Nobel Laureate Nadine Gordimer of South Africa, actress Misako Konno of Japan and Dikembe Mutombo of the New Jersey Nets as UNDP's Youth Emissary. In this capacity, she helped organize UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's First and Second Gathering of Messengers of Peace and Goodwill Ambassadors of all of the UN agencies held at UN headquarters in October 2000 and June 2002 respectively. She also developed the theme Race Against Poverty for UNDP's annual global communications campaign for poverty eradication and spearheaded that agency's worldwide planning and execution of the Global Staff Forum Task Force for the first UNDP Global Staff Forum based in a country-office—Pretoria, South Africa. This resulted in a historic simultaneous participation of 86 countries by video, audio, telephone and webcast.

Prior to her work at the United Nations, Ms. Davis was the Director of Public Affairs of the African-American Institute headquartered in New York City responsible for policy conferences in the U.S. and Africa as well as an array of advocacy and promotional activities for Africa in the United States.

###