FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gwendolyn Brooks Center Hosts Hip-Hop Writers Workshops This Weekend

CHICAGO--(NOVEMBER 10, 2008) Acclaimed author Kevin Coval, whose work has been featured in four seasons of HBO’s “Def Poetry Jam,” will lead a two-day writing workshop for Chicago area high school and college students on Saturday, November 15 and Sunday, November 16, 2008 at Chicago State University. The series, “Working Writers: Poetry and Fiction from A to Z,” is hosted by the Gwendolyn Brooks Center.

“Kevin is one of the finest writers of his generation. It is a gift that he is also a fine person committed to the power of writing and ideas to transform minds and lives,” said Quraysh Ali Lansana, director of the Brooks Center. Lansana feels that Coval’s work “resonates with literary awareness, spiritual consciousness and urban grit, making him perhaps one of the nation's most refreshing voices in his genre.”


“Coval’s philosophy resembles Brooks’ in that he uses poetry to increase understanding about Black culture in America,” said Lansana.

The Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Black Literature and Creative Writing at Chicago State University was founded in 1990 by Chicago State University Distinguished Professor Haki R. Madhubuti who was inspired by the life and works of the late Distinguished CSU Professor Gwendolyn Brooks, poet laureate of Illinois and the first African-American to win a Pulitzer Prize.

The mission of the Brooks Center is to encourage the study of black writers and strengthen the humanities—especially literature, history, art, music, culture and health awareness—by engaging in collaborative and interactive programming.

“The Brooks Center is committed to providing options and opportunities, particularly for young people within the community, something Brooks felt strongly about,” Lansana explained.

During the past 18 years, the Center has inducted numerous Illinois artists into its International Literary Hall of Fame, including Martin Espada, Bennett Johnson, Sam Greenlee, Bebe Moore Campbell, Dr. Barbara A. Sizemore, Patricia Smith and the recently deceased Studs Terkel.