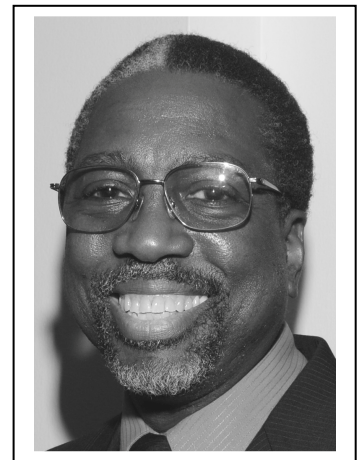


**The Gordon Parks Museum/Center for Culture and Diversity
Fort Scott Community College
Fort Scott, KS**

News Release

For Immediate Release: October 3, 2011
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Musician Mario Sprouse will appear at Gordon Parks Celebration

Fort Scott— The Gordon Parks Celebration will feature musician Mario E. Sprouse as a speaker and performer during the eighth annual Gordon Parks Celebration on October 7-8 at Fort Scott Community College. Mr. Sprouse was the longtime music collaborator with Gordon Parks and will speak about this relationship on Friday, October 7 at 1:30 p.m. in the theatre of the Danny and Willa Ellis Family Fine Arts Center. This event is free and open to the public. Mr. Sprouse will also perform some Parks' music at the Tribute Dinner on Saturday, Oct. 8 at the Liberty Theatre. Tickets are \$25 for this event that will honor the "Gordon Parks Choice of Weapons" award winner this year, John Shearer.

Mario E. Sprouse has been active in the arena of music, theater and film for over 47 years. Recently he has been involved with cataloging the massive music/media collection of the late, legendary, modern Renaissance man Gordon Parks, for whom he was the musical assistant for over 20 years. Mr. Sprouse performed at Mr. Parks' funeral at The Riverside Church in 2006 and at the first Gordon Parks Foundation Fundraising Dinner in 2007. In addition, Mr. Sprouse was the Music Supervisor for three of Parks' films: "Moments Without Proper Names", "Martin – a film ballet" and the Emmy-nominated HBO documentary "Half-Past Autumn: the Life and Works of Gordon Parks." In this latter capacity, Mr. Sprouse worked with late veteran African-American documentary film maker St. Claire Bourne. He also produced Gordon Parks' first CD of original classical music created to accompany his book "A Star for Noon."

Mr. Sprouse has provided musical arrangements for several short films and has been musical director for a number of theatrical events, including "Black Nativity – a Gospel Song Play" by Langston Hughes (Obie Award winner); "Lena Calhoun Horne – the Civil Rights Journey of a Negro Woman" and "The Dark Star from Harlem," a tribute to Josephine Baker at La Mama Theater in New York City. In addition, he arranged and orchestrated the Off-Broadway musical "Take It Easy" written by Raymond Fox and performed at the Judith Anderson Theater. He also produced the original cast album. In 2005 Mr. Sprouse won an award for as the Best Musical Director from Spotlight On Productions for the play with music "...from the front porch" written and performed by Renee Flemings.

Carmen McRae, Hubert Laws, Cornell Dupree, Buster Williams, Freddie Hubbard and Grover Washington, Jr. are some of the jazz artists who have recorded his musical arrangements. Orchestrations and original songs written by Mr. Sprouse have been performed live by Gregory Hines and Phylicia Rashaad.

The Celebration schedule is available on the Center's website www.gordonparkscenter.org. Tickets for Gordon Parks Celebration events are on sale at the Gordon Parks Museum on the FSCC campus and in downtown Fort Scott at The Country Cupboard. For more information contact the Center by phone at 223-2700, ext. 5850 or by email at gordonparkscenter@fortscott.edu or see the website.

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