NEWS RELEASE

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Pulitzer Nominee, Award-Winning Author & Reporter Wil Haygood to Give 2017 MLK Lecture

Best known as the author of the New York Times bestseller The Butler: A Witness to History

Wil Haygood will deliver the 2017 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecturer. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture Sunday, January 15, 2 pm at Main Library in downtown Akron. Haygood’s topic is “A Legal Giant, a Butler, and a King.”

Best known as the author of the New York Times bestseller The Butler: A Witness to History, Wil Haygood is a distinguished writer whose career has spanned decades. He was an associate producer on the film adaptation of his book, The Butler, which was sparked from his Washington Post article. The movie featured performances by Academy Award winners Forest Whittaker, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Robin Williams, Vanessa Redgrave and Jane Fonda and Oprah Winfrey. He worked for 30 years at two newspapers (The Boston Globe and The Washington Post); during that time, he witnessed Nelson Mandela’s release after 27 years of imprisonment, was taken hostage by Somalian rebels, covered New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina for 33 straight days without a break, traveled with Barack Obama, and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Translated into over a dozen languages, The Butler: A Witness to History, is the story of Eugene Allen, the White House butler who served U.S. presidents from Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan. Allen’s time as a butler led him to become a “discreet stage hand who for three decades helped keep the show running in the most important political theatre of all.”

The Butler book received the following honors: Ohioana Book Award, the Scribes Book Award and a BCALA Literary Award, finalist for an NAACP Image Award, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, an Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence and the Benjamin Hooks National Book Award. It was named one of the best books of the year by The Washington Post, NPR, The Boston Globe, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Booklist and Baltimore magazine.

Haygood’s newest book Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court Nomination that Changed America, a sweeping epic about the real-life events surrounding the heated appointment of Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American Supreme Court justice.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture is sponsored by the Akron-Summit County Public Library and the Eta Tau Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. The event is free and open to the public.