

A FAREWELL TO

## Marc Crawford

*Professor Marc Crawford, a longtime friend of the Faculty Resource Network and organizer of the Network's jazz evenings since 1990, died earlier this year in March. Marc was an award-winning journalist, jazz historian, and master teacher of creative writing at NYU. The Network's summer 1996 jazz evening held on June 13, 1996, in the University's Violet Café was dedicated to Marc's memory. Reprinted below is the tribute to Marc that appeared in a special program prepared for the June event.*



Marc Crawford.

Born in Detroit in 1929, Marc joined the army as a teenager, serving in the U.S. occupation forces in Japan and in the Korean War. Honorably discharged in 1953, he took up the pen for his craft, writing for the *Kansas City Call*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Ebony*, and many other publications. His remarkable gift for prose was quickly noticed, and he served as entertainment editor, foreign correspondent, and foreign editor for *Jet* in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Throughout his career as a writer and editor, Marc Crawford served as a pioneer and pathmaker: he was the first African American journalist on the staff of *Life* magazine; he founded *Tone*, a literary supplement for African American newspapers; he coauthored *The Lincoln Brigade*, a history for teenagers on American volunteers in the Spanish Civil War; and he established *Time Capsule* magazine and a publishing company, Time Capsule Inc., to provide a forum for new writers. His articles and features were cited for numerous honors, and his coverage of the civil disturbances in Watts in 1965 for *Life* won him the 1966 National Headliners Club Award.

But, perhaps, it is as a critic and scholar of jazz that Marc will be best remembered. In countless articles, reviews, and essays he held forth on the complexities, intricacies, and beauties of jazz. In his prose, he emulated its rhythms and melodies, celebrated its improvisational essence, and analyzed its origins

and history as an art form distilled from the African American experience. He interviewed and profiled many of its towering figures—Thelonius Monk, Miles Davis, Bud Powell, and Sonny Rollins were but a few of the luminaries whom Marc engaged in enlightening dialogue. Within the fraternity of jazz criticism, Marc is recognized as one of its most eminent practitioners, and his writings will serve as a vital resource for scholars for many years to come.

At New York University, Marc served on the faculty of the School of Continuing Education and as a Faculty Host and adviser for the Faculty Resource Network. As a master teacher of creative writing, Marc helped many aspiring writers hone their talents and discover their gift for composing prose. He also taught a very popular course on jazz appreciation and established the noted NYU Jazz Series. Through his efforts, a new generation of jazz aficionados first learned to understand and cherish the music, and in recognition of his remarkable contributions to campus life, the School of Continuing Education awarded him its Distinguished Service Award in 1986. Within the Faculty Resource Network, Marc drew upon his encyclopedic knowledge of jazz to assist visiting faculty with their research projects. Marc opened up countless doors and opportunities for our scholars by utilizing his vast number of contacts within the jazz world. Thanks to his



Above: The Ted Dunbar Quartet performing at the Memorial Tribute to Marc Crawford.

Right: Professor Robin D. G. Kelley of the Department of History at NYU speaking at the Memorial Tribute to Marc Crawford.



encouragement and insights, many groundbreaking works of jazz scholarship were brought to fruition.

Marc's generous, warm-hearted spirit will be deeply missed by all who had the honor to know him. Even during his long, hard battle with cancer, he never lost his gregarious nature or his gift for the inspirational word. In celebration of a life well-lived, we offer this memorial concert to commemorate Marc Crawford—writer, scholar, teacher, and a true friend.

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