

## **For Immediate Release**

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# **Historian Howard Dodson Illumines The Bahamas**



Rowena F. Finlayson presents token of appreciation to Howard Dodson, Chief of the Schomburg Center

**Nassau, The Bahamas (6<sup>th</sup> November 2003)** – Internationally revered historian Howard Dodson, Chief of New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and author of the recently published book entitled *Jubilee: The Emergence of African-American Culture*, traveled to The Bahamas to continue his humanitarian efforts as partner in the Bahamian/Dominican/American Partnership.

Mr. Dodson made international headlines for coordinating last month's African Burial Ground Project commemorative events, which centred on the dignified reinterment of the bones of African-American slaves, found during the 1991 construction of a Federal building in lower Manhattan. The project, developed in cooperation with U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), brought worldwide attention to the existence of the earliest African-American cemetery in the United States, considered to be one of the most important archeological finds of our time.

Following an in-depth forensic examination of the excavated bones by experts at Howard University, it was established that these individuals, many of whom were mere children, experienced considerable physical duress, which further served to permanently dispel the notion that slavery was not practiced in the North. To the contrary, New York, particularly the Wall Street area, ultimately became one of the country's largest slave trade hubs.

Mr. Dodson also made international headlines when he intervened on behalf of the Schomburg Center to quell the attempted Ebay.com sale of a large quantity of previously unknown Malcolm X documents. Mr. Dodson, as guest on the ABC television programme

*Like It Is*, with award-winning journalist Gil Noble, spoke of the Schomburg Center's attempts to procure these documents in order to guarantee their preservation and ensure that their contents would be made available to historians, researchers, educators and students throughout the world. Shortly after Mr. Dodson's appearance on *Like It Is*, an anonymous, international Malcolm X collector came forward to secure the historical documents for the Schomburg Center.

Working with the Ministry of Tourism on the Bahamian Heroes project, Mr. Dodson was closely involved in documenting in-depth, historic interviews with Bahamian Founding Father, Hon. Arthur D. Hanna, which focused on both international and domestic events leading to The Bahamas gaining its Independence in 1973.

Collaborating with Dr. Gail Saunders of the National Archives, Mr. Dodson sought to bring the Schomburg Center's *Africana Age: African Diasporan Transformations in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* photographic exhibition to The Bahamas as part of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence celebrations.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November, Mrs. Rowena Finlayson presented Mr. Dodson with a token of appreciation for his humanitarian efforts on behalf of The Bahamas; efforts which continue to illuminate Bahamians, Dominicans, Americans and all members of the African Diaspora who seek to reveal and accurately document the truth of their history.