



For Immediate Release
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University Communications

Author of Hollywood hit 'The Butler' to visit SVSU

Saginaw Valley State University will play host to a Washington Post reporter and author of a book recently turned into the nation's No. 1 film at the box office. Wil Haygood, author of "The Butler: A Witness to History", will speak Monday, Sept. 30 at 7 p.m. in SVSU's Rhea Miller Recital Hall. He will hold a book signing following his public talk.

Haygood's visit comes courtesy of a collaboration between SVSU and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, each of which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Haygood's book chronicles the real-life story of Eugene Allen, a black White House butler who worked for eight U.S. presidents - from Truman to Reagan - during an era that included the height of the Civil Rights movement. The Hollywood movie based on Haygood's book stars Forest Whitaker and Oprah Winfrey.

The film adaptation in August earned \$24.6 million in its first three days, making it tops at the box office during one of Hollywood's highest-grossing summer movie seasons of all time.

Haygood has authored other books on memorable figures in black history including Sammy Davis Jr., Sugar Ray Robinson and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Haygood's career started at The Boston Globe and later moved to The Washington Post. In his journalism career, he reported on a number of historically-significant events including the civil war in Somalia, Nelson Mandela's release from prison, and Hurricane Katrina.

Founded in 1963, SVSU has welcomed numerous guest speakers to share diverse viewpoints and experiences with its students and residents of Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Region. A comprehensive university with more than 90 programs of study for its more than 10,000 students, SVSU is committed to quality teaching in the classroom, field-based learning outside, NCAA Division II athletics and a broad range of academic and extracurricular opportunities for students to excel.

The SVSU event is an early stop on the Michigan Department of Civil Rights' year-long tour of 50 Michigan cities commemorating the 50th anniversary of the department's creation. MDCR 50th anniversary events showcase MDCR services and provide an opportunity for department staff to meet with community leaders and citizens on a variety of topics. The complete 50-city anniversary tour schedule is on the department's website, www.Michigan.gov/MDCR.

#SVSU#