

LOCAL / REGIONAL

UTC Book Club explores 'The Harlem Renaissance and its Legacy'

By Camm Ashford

Take Five, a University of Tennessee at Chattanooga book club, is gearing up to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the publication of a significant African American anthology.

This spring's book club theme, "The Harlem Renaissance and Its Legacy," commemorates the centennial of "The Book of American Negro Poetry." The collection, compiled by James Weldon Johnson, features the work of 31 poets. Its 1922 release is the first anthology of African American poetry published by a major company (Harcourt, Brace and Company).

"Every year, we choose five books centered on some theme and

get five faculty members to present on these different books, and we've developed a nice little following over the years," said Take Five organizer Dr. Aaron Shaheen, the George C. Connor Professor of American Literature in the Department of English.

"Since I was awarded this professorship, it has been a big priority for me to continue the series. It's been a labor of love, and there is a lot that goes into getting it organized."

James Weldon Johnson, a poet and diplomat who had already gained a certain amount of fame for his novel, "The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man," joins W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke in being considered the elder statesmen of the

Harlem Renaissance.

"The Book of American Negro Poetry" is informally credited with catalyzing the Harlem Renaissance movement, a period of African American culture in the 1920s and 1930s known for its literature, music and art.

"Johnson is also known today for writing the lyrics of 'Lift Every Voice and Sing,' and his brother, Rosamond, wrote the music for it," Dr. Shaheen noted.

A staple of the UTC Department of English's public programming since the early 1990s, Take Five future dates, presenters and books for the spring semester include:

Feb. 15: Professor Emerita of English Immaculate Kizza will lead

a discussion on William Pickens' "Bursting Bonds: The Autobiography of a 'New Negro.'"

March 8: Assistant Professor Hannah Wakefield will discuss Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God."

March 29: Associate Professor of Management Gail Dawson will present "There Is Confusion" by Jessie Redmon Fauset.

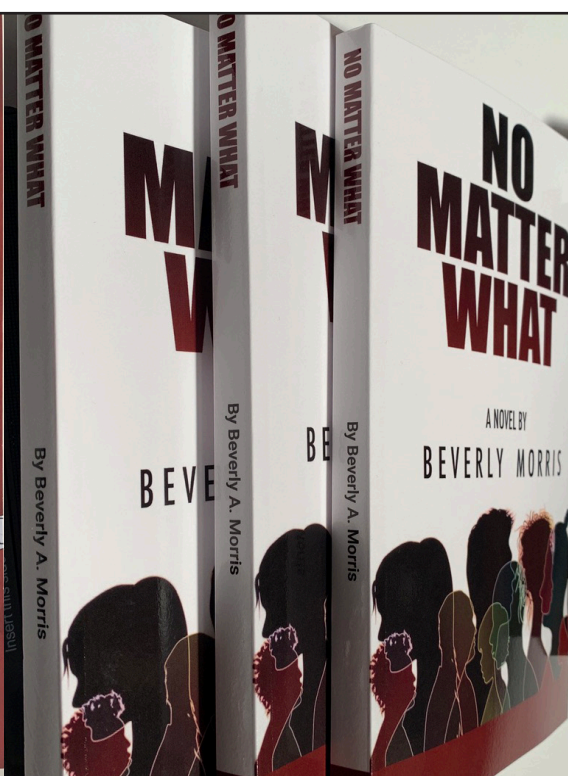
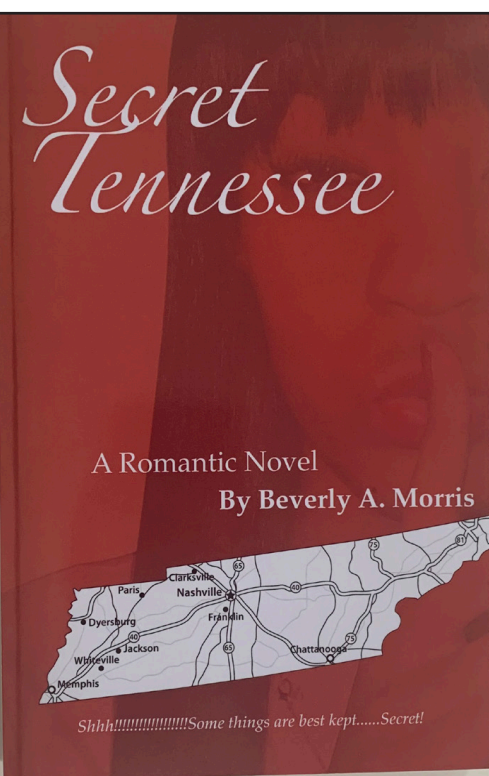
April 5: Earl Braggs, Herman H. Battle Professor of African American Studies, will present "Sula" by Toni Morrison.

Take Five seminars are open to UTC faculty, staff, students and the general public.

For further information, call Dr. Shaheen at (423) 425-5398.



TOP: Earl Braggs, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Herman H. Battle Professor of African American Studies. BOTTOM: Dr. Aaron Shaheen, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga George C. Connor Professor of American Literature in the Department of English.



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