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University of Dayton

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NEWS RELEASE

**UD ENGLISH PROFESSOR HERBERT WOODWARD MARTIN
 TO RECEIVE HONORARY DEGREE AT MAY COMMENCEMENT**

DAYTON, Ohio — In the twilight of his career, Herbert Woodward Martin is being showered with awards, accolades and adulations. But none, he says, touches him like the one he'll collect on Sunday, May 5.

The professor emeritus of English at the University of Dayton will receive an honorary doctorate degree of humane letters during the school's spring commencement.

"It's such a thrill to be honored by the people you work with and practically live with on a daily basis," said Martin, who began teaching at UD in 1971. "This is a very, very special award for me."

Martin, 68, has earned national acclaim for his poetry and portrayal of poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, a native Daytonian and the country's first African-American poet to achieve national and international fame. Martin is featured on UD's Web site dedicated to Dunbar at <http://www.udayton.edu/~dunbar>.

"Herb Martin continues to be outstanding in his interpretative reading of Paul Laurence Dunbar," said Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., UD president. "Equally important has been his guidance as a consummate teacher to our students over the past three decades."

As a young boy, Martin often was told he looked like Dunbar. But it wasn't until the Alabama native accepted a position as poet-in-residence at UD in 1970 (the city where Dunbar lived and worked) that Martin began to read, teach, perform and research the author's works.

Martin himself is a prolific and award-winning poet and author. Recently, he co-edited the book *In His Own Voice : The Dramatic and Other Uncollected Works of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, a 305-page volume of Dunbar's previously unpublished and uncollected short stories, essays, poems and dramas.

He also has written a collection of poems called *Galileo's Suns* and *The Log of the Vigilante*, a journal of slave captivity. His other published works include drama, opera libretti and literary criticism.

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Among his most recent honors is the 2002 Governor's Award for the Arts given by the Ohio Arts Council in the "individual artist" category. In May the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature will give him the Mark Twain Award for "distinguished contributions" to literature and poetry.

"This accolade tells me that people enjoy my work, and that's one of the greatest compliments a person can receive," Martin said. "It's wonderful to be appreciated."

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