

**Langston Hughes and Sonia Sanchez:  
2001 Ford Freedom Award Winners**



Sonia Sanchez, 2001 Ford Freedom Award Lecturer, author, activist and professor, with student essay winners from Metro Detroit area schools of the 2001 Ford Freedom Award program, sponsored by Ford Motor Company at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Feb 22.

Photo credit: Keith Tolman, Ford Motor Company



Sonia Sanchez, 2001 Ford Freedom Award Lecturer, author, activist and professor, lectures to Detroit area students on staying positive, and staying in school at the 2001 Ford Freedom Award Lecture Ceremony held at the Detroit Opera House, Feb 23.

The 2001 Ford Freedom Award was given to Langston Hughes, one of the most prolific African-American writers of all time. Sonia Sanchez, poet and activist, was named the Ford Freedom Scholar in honor of Hughes. The three-day celebration at Detroit's Museum of African American History was held in February, Black History Month.

The Ford Freedom Award was created in 1999 to recognize, posthumously, distinguished individuals whose lives improved the African-American community and the world at large. Last year, Sammy Davis Jr. was the second recipient of the Freedom Award and Gregory Hines, actor, dancer and choreographer, was the Ford Freedom Scholar.

**Mazda Foundation Boosts Grant to Japanese Studies Program at Dillard University**

The Mazda Foundation, which already contributes \$40,000 annually to Dillard University's Japanese Studies Program, will add \$25,000 to its grant.

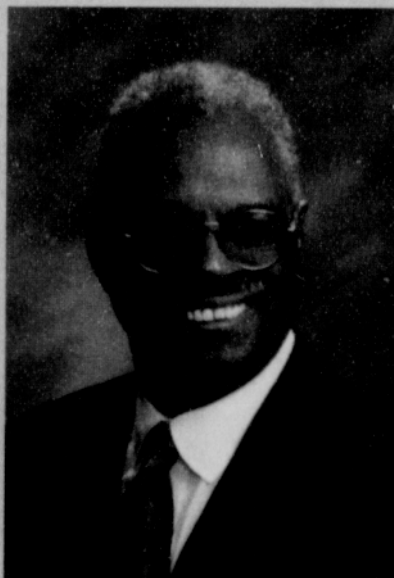
The additional funding will be dedicated to the creation of a Mazda Foundation Japanese Studies Computer Lab.

In 1998, the Mazda Foundation began funding scholarships for Dillard's Japanese Studies Program, the first of its kind at a historically Black college or university. Since 1999, the Foundation has provided \$40,000 annually. Dillard matches the Mazda grants on a dollar-per-dollar basis, further boosting funding for students pursuing language as well as business studies that focus on the Far East.

The Mazda Foundation was created in 1990 to demonstrate Mazda's commitment to improving the quality of life in the communities in which it does business.

In a separate announcement, Dillard President, Dr. Michael Lomax named Steven Odell, vice president of marketing and sales of Mazda North American Operations, to the New Orleans-based school's board of directors.

**Minority-owned Company Buys a Majority Interest in an Illinois Seat Supplier Firm**



Ernie Green will oversee new venture

Ernie Green Industries Inc., of Dayton, Ohio, increased its business with Toyota by acquiring a majority interest in a seat supplier.

Green Industries purchased a majority interest in the Lawrenceville, Ill., operation of Trim Masters Inc. The Trim Masters facility is a Johnson Controls Inc. joint venture with Araco Corp., and is one of six manufacturing plants Trim Masters operates in the United States.

The new minority-owned company, called Automotive Technology Systems, LLC, officially launched operations at the Lawrenceville site in January. It is supplying automotive seat systems and door panels for Toyota pickup trucks produced in Princeton, Ind.

Green Industries now holds a 51 percent majority stake in the new company. Trim Masters will own the remaining 49 percent.

Ernie Green, founder, president and chief executive officer of Ernie Green Industries, will serve as CEO of Automotive Technology Systems.