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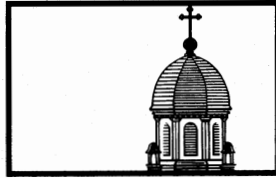
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NEWS RELEASE

**'HARLEM EXCHANGE' RELIES ON LETTERS
BETWEEN FRIENDS OF THREE DECADES**

DAYTON, Ohio — Two young black high school kids meet in a summertime program in Harlem in the 1960s. An enduring friendship develops even though their lives diverge radically from that point on. One goes the boarding-school route; the other becomes a political activist.

The letters these two characters share over the next three decades is the basis of *Harlem Exchange*, an epistolary play that will be presented at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 13, in the Sears Recital Hall in the Jesse Philips Humanities Center at the University of Dayton.

Admission is free, but reservations are required because of limited seating. Call (937) 229-3793 for reservations.

The two characters, Ralph and Alain, express the collective experiences of a generation rather than actual events from writer and director Dennis Greene's life. Actor and poet Hector Lino, education director at the Boys' Club of New York Harriman Clubhouse, portrays Alain, while Greene is Ralph.

"They come from the same area, but Alain gets the metamorphosis to the American Dream that was possible then, with scholarships to prep schools and all the other benefits of the war on poverty and equal opportunity programs. Ralph enters the vortex of urban politics of the late '60s when activists were trying to change society and the black revolution was seen by some as a terrorism force in the U.S.," said Greene, a visiting professor of law at UD who is from New York's inner city and, as a student at Columbia University, was a founding member of the fifties-revival group Sha Na Na.

The letters reveal the personal conquests over the problems they face and gives psychological insight into their lives, Greene said.

The play has been performed about 50 times over the last 10 years. "One of my big aspirations has been to get non-theatergoers to appreciate theater," Greene said. "At this play, people laugh and people cry, so it's been extraordinarily effective. It can be a psychologically cathartic experience for those not used to theater."

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Among audience members, Greene has noticed an appreciation for different facets of the performance. Foreign nationals, he said, are engaged by the peek they get into African-American culture. People of "a certain chronological age" get into the issues because they grew up in those times, and they love the music that helps bridge the three decades, Greene said.

College students, and others, garner insight into the range and limits experienced by those who came of age in a very political environment, he said.

Greene's next project will be a play about reparations issues. "We need to open up the dialogue about reparations, to bring out some of the historical elements and get some discourse started," he said. "The issue merits more serious discussions than you can get on *Politically Incorrect*."

He hopes to have a stage version ready to go in the fall, when he takes a post as a faculty member of the newly resurrected School of Law at Florida A&M University.

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For media interviews, contact **Dennis Greene** at (937) 229-4796 or via e-mail at dennis.greene@notes.udayton.edu.