The National Conference of Artists Celebrates its 50th Anniversary at Clark Atlanta University.

On Friday, May 1, 2009, national and local chapters of the National Conference of Artists (NCA) will assemble to conduct a ceremony commemorating its inauguration in 1959 at then, Atlanta University’s Waddell Gallery. The NCA is the oldest and largest visual art organization that provides a national and international forum for emerging and established artists of African descent. Cofounders of the NCA include Chicago-based artists Bernard Goss, Marion Perkins, Robert Jones, and the distinguished artist and educator, Dr. Margaret Burroughs, who also founded Chicago’s DuSable Museum of African-American History and Southside Community Center, and the Association of African-American Museums. During the 18th of the twenty-nine Atlanta University Art Annuals, initiated by Hale Woodruff in 1942, exhibiting artists convened a conference in the interest of promoting, developing, and preserving African-American culture. Inaugurated as the National Conference of Negro Artists, the group later became the National Conference of Artists. Since that occasion, the organization has remained steadfast to its mission working with educational and multicultural institutions. Among a host of activities, NCA provides scholarships for emerging artists seeking degrees in the visual arts and supports the work of other arts and cultural organizations by featuring their events. Numerous chapters are located throughout the country, including Atlanta, Detroit, Chicago, Boston, Birmingham, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Rochester, New York. Other 50th anniversary events have already occurred during February in New York City at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The rededication ceremony, to be held on the campus of Clark Atlanta University, will begin at 3:00 P.M. in front of the William Danforth Chapel located on the quadrangle directly across from Harkness Hall, where a procession with African drums will lead the group to the Aspacio Atrium of the CAU Art Galleries on the second floor of Trevor Arnett Hall. The theme of NCA’s 50th Anniversary is A New Era of Challenges and Changes in Promoting Black Art.

Members of the NCA Board of Directors include:
Dr. Margaret Burroughs, Founder, Chicago; Dr. Murray DePillars, Cochairman, Richmond, VA Dr. Jim Chaffers, Vice-Chair, Ann Arbor, MI; Willis “Bing” Davis, Treasurer, Dayton, OH Dr. Rosalind Jefferies, Teaneck, NJ; Dr. Haki Madhubuti, Chicago; Justine Presha DeVan, Secretary, Philadelphia, PA; Dr. Floyd Coleman, Washington, D.C.; Bamidele Demerson, Detroit MI; E. Barry Gaither, Boston, MA; Lee Gill, Berrien Springs, MI; Jon Onye Lockard, Ann Arbor, MI.

This momentous observance is free and open to the public.