Congratulations to
Julianne Richardson, the brain behind the heart and soul of The MysteryMakers, an oral history archive, on being the first person named the Vernon D. Jarrett Great Cities Fellow at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Richardson was honored Thursday at a reception co-hosted by Robin Hamilton, dean of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at UIC, and David P. Feinberg, director of the Great Cities Institute. The Vernon D. Jarrett Senior Fellow Program seeks to extend Jarrett’s legacy as both an activist and a public intellectual through an annual appointment of a similarly inclined academician or public leader to the post Jarrett held at the Great Cities Institute before his death. For more on the Vernon D. Jarrett Great Cities Senior Fellow Program, visit www.vernondjarrettfoundation.org.

Baby Bonni! - It's a double dose of family joy as Adl Richardson, 9th generation, is expecting a boy, and her baby girl, Jamilah, is waiting to be surprised. Of course, Jamilah’s shower, co-hosted this weekend by DArch and Black Ensemble Theatre’s Jackie Taylor, is expected to feature an “A” list of Black Chicago. Under the direction of one of our town’s premier entertainers, Faye Watson (of Fann/Fare to Faye fame), this sure to be one magnificent celebration. Among just some of the names spotted on the exclusive invite list—Melody Spann-Cooper, Rev. and Mrs. Jesse Jackson, Linda Johnson Rice, H. Kelly.

Newly Names - Rev. James T. Hooks (also a state senator), and Anne Duncan, CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, are expected at Pilsen Elementary School, 2014 W. 21st St., today at 2 p.m. to unveil the district’s newest attendance incentives that will target the lowest-attendance schools. The incentives have been provided by the good folks from WGCQ, Clear Channel Radio and Nike. ... We welcome Art "Chat Daddy" Sims, the bon vivant relationship guru, to the staff of the Chicago Defender. His "In the Mix" column will run twice weekly on our page. ... D. Earl Jones, regional vice president of Clear Channel Radio Chicago, hosts a Lunchbox Salute honoring Illinois Senate President Emil Jones. On March 27 in the Signature Room of the 9510 - cultivatís~ning-Chicago's mouth-watering tribute to our state’s Mr. President. ... Dr. Guillermo Acevedo, historical engineering professor at Northwestern U., loaned the monthly Mac Boy Breakfast on March 18 hosted by Concerned Christian Men, Inc. (CCM) at Simon Career Academy. ... Hungry? Visit Jeanneta Passmore and Dr. Sandria Givens, a couple of satellite members of the Chicago Caravans of Avis LaVelle, indeed one of our town’s most suave and politically-connected consultants. Henrietta Leah, the blindeared "first lady" and keeper of the Leak Funeral Home and Gym; and Stedman Graham, businessman, author and - oh, need I say more? ... Danielle Caire and Anthony Jones co-host First Fridays Chaocers at 7/16/09/remember Circus NightFlight, 901 W. Weed, featuring the best of old school, R&B, house and hip-hop music. Doors open at 6 p.m. with a complimentary "sooth of the border" buffet. Free admission till 9 p.m.

In Memoriam - Condolences to the family of Dr. Clementine McConico Skinner, 80, retired educator, librarian and administrator in the Chicago Public Schools, whose funeral is Saturday, 10 a.m., at Sixth Grace Presbyterian Church, 35th and Cottage Grove, preceded by a one-hour visitation. Her body will lie in state all day Friday at Griffins Funeral Home, 3535 S. King Dr.

Expo Insight - Roland S. Martin, the Defender’s executive editor, moderated a Town Hall Meeting at Expo for Today’s Blog Woman, Saturday, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at McCormick Place. Among the black and white panelists discussing how African Americans suffer disproportionately from cardiovascular diseases, including heart failure are Mercy Hospitals Dr. Niva Lubin-Johnson, Detroit’s Pastor Marvin Winans and Duke University’s Dr. Augustine Grant.

In this photo provided by Brazan PR, Dave Chappelle stars in all-new freestyle standup material in “Dave Chappelle’s Block Party.”

Black Tax, celebrity, and Dave Chappelle

by Ken Parish Perkins
Continuing Writer

Watching Dave Chappelle emerge from his self-imposed cocoon recently has been one part fascinating and one part baffling. If only because of his new movie, "Block Party." Then again, his decision to dig a deep hole, walk away from the myriad of money and series television talk about how he did it. (Without so much as a word.)

You wonder if Chappelle’s new movie wasn’t arriving in the stores Friday, if he weren’t snuffed out of hiding to deal with publicity et al., whether he’d still be ruminating underground, not seen or heard.

Instead he’s squirreling away in Oprah, squiring yet hilariously insightful. "Inside The Actor’s Studio with host James Lipton, squiring yet loose when hanging out in Steve Harvey’s radio studio. Instead he’s reaching folks who didn’t know he existed, didn’t know the space he’s considered The Funniest Man Alive, didn’t know that Chappelle’s Show attracted more viewers than Jon Stewart’s The Daily Show. So if this was Chappelle’s grand plan, ditching the cable channel, blowing $50 million, leaving his wife and kids for South Africa and peace of mind — at least give the brother props for ingenuity.

Dave Chappelle’s Block Party is receiving far more attention now that the comic is known as the Runaway Comedian, having bolted from the set of his self-titled show on Comedy Central and disappearing with no trace.

The ink on his $50 million contract was barely dry before Chappelle decided to high-tail it out of the states, leaving the set without even an "Eeyore," disappearing like a thief in the night. Or, better yet, a man in need of an understanding psychiatrist.

He ended up in South Africa, then chilling, just clearing his head, he says now, with that sly, creepy grin of his. While doing so, rumors had him in drug rehab, in mental institutions, hanging from the Brooklyn Bridge.

"Little of it made sense. As Chappelle quipped to Oprah: ‘Who would leave America and go to Africa for medical attention?’

See CHAPPELLE, page 16