

Theatre Professor To Debut Play

BY KEITH BROOKS



PROFESSOR LAWTON (COURTESY OF JASON HORNICK)

Since Jacqueline Lawton, a theater professor at The University of the District of Columbia, made her debut as a playwright in 2006, her career has gone from strong to stronger. She credits her success, in part to the richness of the District's theater scene.

"I feel quite fortunate to have so many opportunities to develop and showcase my work. It's amazing to live in a city where local playwrights are supported and new plays are advocate for so strongly," said Lawton.

Her upcoming events would encourage any new artist. Theater J will present a reading of *The Hampton Years* at the Phillips Collection in Northwest followed by a post show discussion on Saturday, April 13th at 2 pm. This offers patrons the opportunity to attend a reading of Lawton's play before it premieres.

Meanwhile, Theatre J located in Northwest Washington, D.C., will present the world premiere of the play from May 29 to June 30, 2013. The play analyzes the development of great African- American artists John Biggers and Samella Leurs and focuses on their pivotal years at Hampton Institute, Virginia during WWII. This thoroughly researched story of two African Americans reveals the dreams of young artists in a segregated society.

"Working on *The Hampton Years*, at Theater J has been an extraordinary experience. So, really and truly, I feel blessed and excited about everything," said Lawton.

Recently, outside of the District, Lawton had a reading of her new play, *Our Man Beverly Snow* on Thursday, March 21st at Gettysburg College as part of its New Works Festival. Then, Sunday, March 24, she participated on a panel discussion about gender and race in the American Theater as part of Boston Center for the Arts and Company One's XX Playlab Festival, a showcase of new work by Boston playwrights offering dialogue with the playwrights and several leading artists in the field.