

VISITING SPEAKER: DR. KEITH MILLER

Thursday, April 17, 2014

The Common Room
(WMS 013)

3:30-5:00 PM

RETHINKING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: WHY THE NATIONAL MEMORY IS WRONG

Rosa Parks admired Malcolm X. Charles Billups led the climactic march of the entire African American struggle. Alma Androzzo wrote the conclusion of the best-known sermon in American history. Pauli Murray, a friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, was decades ahead of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and us.

Why is Rosa Parks so widely misunderstood and why are Billups, Androzzo, and Murray so obscure? The national memory of the civil rights movement flattens an utterly fascinating phenomenon into a highly oversimplified, truncated, distorted, and misleading account. This talk explores this reduction and weighs its cost.



Keith D. Miller is Professor of English at Arizona State University and a former WPA. He is the author of *Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Its Sources* and, more recently, of *Martin Luther King's Biblical Epic: His Great, Final Speech*. Published in *Rhetoric Review*, his essay, "I Have a Dream," won the Theresa Enos Essay of the Year Award in 2007. In addition, the co-edited collection *Race and Writing Assessment*, winner in 2014 of the CCCO Outstanding Book Award, included his co-authored essay, "Challenging the Frameworks of Color-blind Racism."