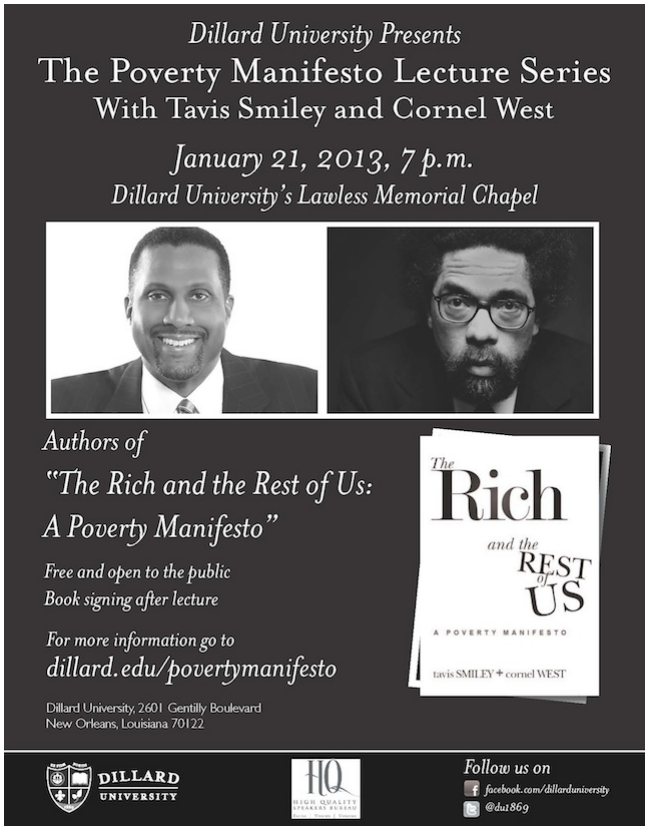

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Dillard University will host an evening with two of the preeminent leaders in African-American thought today, Tavis Smiley and Cornel West. The event, part of the authors' Poverty Manifesto lecture series in conjunction with the High Quality Speakers

Bureau, will feature addresses by Smiley and West, followed by an audience Q&A, and a signing of their 2012 book “The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto.” It will begin at 7 p.m. on Jan. 21 in Lawless Memorial Chapel. Dillard University welcomes everyone to the free event, which is open to the public.

Smiley is the host of “Tavis Smiley” on PBS, as well as the syndicated radio programs “The Tavis Smiley Show” and “Smiley & West.” He is the first American to simultaneously host talk shows on both public TV and public radio. He has authored 15 books, including “Covenant with Black America,” which became the first non-fiction book by a Black-owned publisher to reach No. 1 on the New York Times bestseller list. In 2009, Time magazine named him to its list of the World’s 100 Most Influential People.

West is a professor of philosophy and Christian practice at Union Theological Seminary and professor emeritus at Princeton University. He has also taught at Yale, Harvard and the University of Paris. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in three years and obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy at Princeton. He has written 20 books and edited 13. He is best known for his classics “Race Matters” and “Democracy Matters,” and his memoir “Brother West: Living and Loving Out Loud.” He appears frequently on “Real Time with Bill Maher,” “The Colbert Report,” CNN and C-SPAN. He has appeared in over 25 documentaries and films and made three spoken word albums.

Dillard University President Dr. Walter Kimbrough anticipates a packed venue and suggests people arrive early to ensure seating. For more information, contact Mona Duffel Jones in the Office of University Communications and Marketing at mduffeljones@dillard.edu or at (504) 816-4024.