

ACADEMICIAN AND CREOLIST WRITER LYONEL D. DESMARATTES

Lyonel D. Desmarattes is a journalist, poet, a writer, a composer, a motivational speaker from the town of Belle-Anse, southeastern Haiti. Till October 4, 2022 and for almost 35 years, he worked as at the Voice of America, the U.S. radio for the world, as an editor and an international radio broadcaster (IRB) for the Creole Service to Haiti. Before he emigrated to the U.S. in the mid 1980s. to study and work in America, he had worked for about 15 years as a reporter in half a dozen radio stations in Haiti, including La Radio Nationale d'Haiti where he stayed about 10 years.

Grandson of an itinerant evangelist and church founder, Rosilus Durandisse-Sylvain, and son of Dominique Desmarattes, an educator turned politician, Lyonel –as he is commonly called- started writing poetry in grad school specializing early on in classic verses as a student who was fond of French literary works like the fables of Jean de Lafontaine and the comedies of Molière. His penchant for the classics got much stimulation when, as he studied for his high school diploma in

1973, he attended the Conservatoire National d'Art Dramatique where he graduated as the best student of his class. This love for classic stylistics developed till his manhood when it made out of him the author of eight translations of French classics by famous poets and playwrights like Jean Racine, Corneille and mainly Moliere, all written in alexandrine verses -“like the originals”, he likes to say.

In addition to what Professor Bryant Freeman, founder and director of the Institute of Haitian Creole at Kansas University, calls “Desmarattes’ Haitian interpretation of French classics”, he is also the author of Woben Lakwa, Creole translation of Daniel Defoe’s legendary novel Robinson Crusoe, published in 2012 by the Classics Editions, in Gainesville, Florida. He also co-authored The Haitian Creole Newspaper’s Reader, a study book comparing the structure of the English language and that of the Haitian Creole, which he co-signed with British linguist Kate Howe. His most famous book so far, Mouche Defas, an adaptation of Moliere’s Tartufe, will soon be published for the fourth time after a first and a second editions were issued by the Creole Institute of Kansas University (1982 and 1984), and a third by Florida-based publ

-Pope John Paul II’s trip to the Dominican Republic on October 12th., 1992, as the Pontiff was part of the festivities marking the 500th anniversary of the meeting of the two worlds and the opening of the Faro Colòn that the Dominicans consider ‘their own citadel’.

The author of Discovering the Americas is often a guest artist in cultural, artistic, and entertaining events organized by Haitians living abroad in order to mark important dates of the history of Haiti. In October 2003, Desmarattes’ participation in the groundbreaking ceremony for the building, in Savannah, GA, of statues honoring Haitian forefathers who took part in the American Revolutionary War, “was exceptional.” In October 2013 he received from Frantz Benjamin, the Vice Mayor of Montreal, Canada, the key of that city for his “contribution to the development of good comprehension among ethnic groups and the promotion of Haitian culture in the Diaspora.” On January 14, 2023, he was honored by The Commonwealth of Massachusetts with an award recognizing his efforts to use the waves, as a radio reporter, in order to inform and educate Haitians in both the motheland and dteg Disspora.