

# Eugene Redmond



Returning to East St. Louis from the U.S. Marines in the early 1960's, Eugene B. Redmond enrolled at Southern Illinois University-ESL. He wrote poetry, helped the NAACP and CORE desegregate downtown shops, stores and restaurants—and became editor of the ALESTLE, SIUE's student newspaper. He wrote poems and stories for local weekly papers and helped found the ESL Monitor in

1963. After completing graduate school at Washington University in 1966, he returned to ESL, taught at SIUE's Experiment in Higher Education, and served as special assistant to Katherine Dunham. In 1969-70 he was Visiting Writer-in-Residence at Oberlin College in Ohio.

While serving as Professor of English and Poet-in-Residence in Africana Studies at California State University-Sacramento, he won a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship, a Pushcart Prize, and was named Poet Laureate of East St. Louis. He also served as Visiting Scholar-in-Residence in ESL Public School District 189, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (African-American Studies) and Southern University-Baton Rouge. His many books of poetry include *Sentry of the Four Golden Pillars*, *Songs from an Afro-Phone*, *Consider Loneliness As These Things*, *Drumvoices: The Mission of Afro-American Poetry*, and *Arkansippi Memwars*.

Back in the Midwest, Redmond resumed teaching, publishing and organizing from his position as a Professor of English and Black Studies at SIUE. With fellow writers Sherman Fowler and Darlene Roy, he founded the EBR Writers Club (1986) after having introduced the practice of Kwanzaa (1966). He also edited and published the annual *Break Word With The World* and *Drumvoices Revue: A Confluence of Literary, Cultural & Vision Arts* (which included a special issue on the Million Man March). In recognition of his creativity and productivity, he received two American Book Awards from the Before Columbus Foundation.

