

## **The Honorands of The 2012 Commencement**

### **Carrie Mae Weems Doctor of Fine Arts**

Carrie Mae Weems, considered one of the most influential contemporary American artists, investigates yearning, loss, cultural identity, and the visual consequences of power in her artwork. *From Here I Saw What Happened And I Cried*, commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Museum, has been called “one of the masterpieces of our time.” Storytelling is a fundamental aspect of Weem’s work; it is a way to best express the human condition that has been a focus from her earliest documentary photographs. This characteristic continued through increasingly complex and layered works as she has endeavored to intertwine themes found in life – racial, sexual, and cultural identity and history. Long interested in the political, she has launched a public arts campaign that addresses the mounting violence in poor communities. She has exhibited extensively throughout the world and her works are in numerous public and private collections. A touring retrospective of her work, opening September 2012, will travel to major American museums and close at the Guggenheim. Weems earned her bachelor of arts degree at the California Institute of the Arts and a master of fine arts degree at the University of California-San Diego. She is a recipient of the prestigious Joseph H. Hazen Rome Prize Fellowship and in 2009 became a part of the *Art 21* series featured nationally on PBS.