

# Wednesday's Woman

## Author Sandra L. Richards' children's picture book -- rocks!

By Audrey J. Bernard  
Women's Editor

**C**elebrated author **Sandra L. Richards** greeted specially invited guests to an intimate release reception in celebration of her acclaimed tome *Rice & Rocks*, a new children's book connecting cultures through cuisine, which was inspired by the death of her beloved nephew Giovanni. The event was hosted by **Crystal McCrary**, CEO of CM Productions, a television and film production company, and **Kimberly Hatchett**, an executive director, private wealth advisor at Morgan Stanley, at McCrary's elegant duplex at the opulent St. Remo on Central Park West. In addition to the book's illustrator **Megan Kayleigh Sullivan**, the event also attracted notables from film, fashion, art, finance and the media in recognition of Richards' debut as a children's author and her loyal commitment to *Rice & Rocks* benefitting children's literacy worldwide.

During the book's pre-order campaign and since its debut in August, Richards pledged to donate one book for every five books sold to support programs that highlight the importance of children reading. To date, she has donated 175 books across the country.

"Kim and I are such fans of *Rice & Rocks*," McCrary expressed to the guests. "So it was our great privilege to host this book launch for Sandra, a fresh and exciting new voice in children's literature. Her book delivers a powerful message to our youth about inclusiveness and celebrates the commonalities that all cultures share while taking the readers on a magical and thrilling ride."

Richards is the Executive Director, Head of Business Development and Segment Marketing, Wealth Management at Morgan Stanley. She currently serves on the Morgan Stanley Wealth Management Diversity & Inclusion Council and as a Co-Chair of the Wealth Management Multicultural Employee Networking Group.

"I started off writing a book in honor of my nephew, Giovanni, who passed away at the age of eight in 2007. I wanted to have a way of remembering how fun and happy



*Rice & Rocks* on display at the private reception



June Ambrose, Crystal McCrary, Sandra L. Richards, Kimberly Hatchett, Thelma Golden



Crystal McCrary, Sandra L. Richards, Kimberly Hatchett



Megan Kayleigh Sullivan, Sandra L. Richards



Veronica Webb, Sandra L. Richards



Crystal McCrary, Gaye Anderson



Sandra L. Richards, Latham Thomas



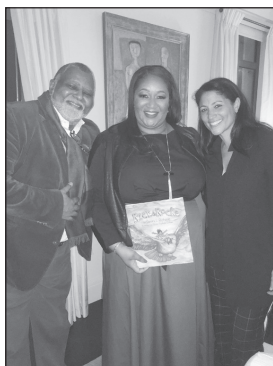
Veronica Webb, Sandra L. Richards, Gil Robertson



Sandra L. Richards, S. Tia Brown



Hill Harper, Crystal McCrary



Alexander Smalls, Sandra L. Richards, Rita Ewing



Sandra L. Richards, Hill Harper

he was while with us," Richards explained. "And during the writing process I thought about how *Rice & Rocks* can serve as an educational resource for families seeking to teach children the importance of cultural diversity. I wanted a book that was relatable and brought people together as we are this evening."

In the book, readers meet Giovanni before his friends come over and he finds out his grandmother is serving

rice and beans, a traditional Jamaican side dish. Giovanni is embarrassed -- he does not like rice and beans, calling them "rice and rocks" and worries his friends will think the dish is weird. So his favorite Auntie comes to the rescue. She and Giovanni's pet parrot, Jasper, take him on a magical journey across the globe, visiting Japan, Puerto Rico and New Orleans, to learn about similar foods to his family's Sunday meal each

place offers.

While indulging in great conversations, guests enjoyed passed finger foods from **Norma Jean Darden's Spoonbread Restaurant** and fine wines including champagne! In addition, each guest received a complimentary signed copy of *Rice & Rocks*, which is described as "A beautiful, amusing tribute to family traditions," by the Kirkus Reviews. The book has garnered a five-star rating on Amazon.com.

*Rice & Rocks* (\$17.99, Wise Ink Creative Publishing) is available for purchase on Amazon, BN, Books A Million or your favorite local independent bookstore. For more information on *Rice & Rocks*, please contact **Marcia Cole** or **Keith Forest** at Ivy Digital at 646.845.9874 or [mcole@ivydigitalllc.com](mailto:mcole@ivydigitalllc.com) or [kforest@ivydigitalllc.com](mailto:kforest@ivydigitalllc.com). (Photos by Ronnie Wright courtesy Sandra L. Richards)



Sharon Lopez, Dr. Michelle Callahan, Adrienne Lopez, Raisa Lopez-Rhoden, Marvette Britto



Book signing guests



Guest, Norma Jean Darden, Cherie Johnson



Guest, Sandra L. Richards, Anita Kopacz