



MEDIA CONTACT INFORMATION:

Treshea N. Wade
Manager of Communications
August Wilson Center for African American Culture
Office 412.258.2692
Cell 412.716.8961
TWade@AugustWilsonCenter.org

PRESS RELEASE

**Excitement is Building...and GROWING!
August Wilson Center Announces New Staff Appointment**

PITTSBURGH, PA—January 11, 2008—The August Wilson Center for African American Culture welcomes Shay Wafer to its staff as Vice President of Programs.

"We are pleased to have Shay join our growing professional staff," said Neil Barclay, President and CEO of the August Wilson Center. "She brings a wealth of experience in programming, administration, marketing and fundraising from her previous positions in the nonprofit sector, and the utmost professionalism and commitment to excellence."

In her new position, Ms. Wafer is responsible for oversight and management of all aspects of programming, including fine art and historical exhibitions, music, dance, theater and cross-disciplinary performances, multimedia and other technology driven presentations. Overall, she is responsible for the planning, development and production of a variety of cultural programs, events and activities that involve and engage the community at large in the mission and vision of the Center.

"My passion for arts management has always been to make a cultural impact in the African American community, and there are very few opportunities to do that at a significant level," said Ms. Wafer. "When the opportunity came to be part of history, and a tremendous legacy, I felt privileged to join the Center's Board and staff in furthering the goals of the institution."

"It's an honor to be on the ground level and to be a part of the creation of a major cultural institution that is going to be significant locally and connected nationally," said Ms. Wafer, a Board Member of the Theatre Communications Group, a national organization that strengthens, nurtures and promotes the professional not-for-profit American theater.

Ms. Wafer joins the Center in the final stages of its Capital Campaign for a \$35.9 million facility currently under construction in the Cultural District, Downtown.

Coming to Pittsburgh from Los Angeles, Ms. Wafer has worked for many years in nonprofit management. Prior to joining the August Wilson Center, Ms. Wafer, a graduate of Yale University, was the Managing

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Director of the award-winning Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles for seven years. She has held administrative positions with a number of nonprofit arts organizations that focus on community outreach and arts-in-education programming.

Formerly the Managing Director of LA Theatre Works, she also served as the Managing Director of the St. Louis Black Repertory Company and was the Program Director for the Black Filmmaker Foundation, Los Angeles branch. She also managed Between Lines, a Los Angeles-based dance company, and worked as a marketing and development consultant for Center Theatre Group.

Ms. Wafer was a student at Yale when Lloyd Richards was Dean of Yale School of Drama and Artistic Director of Yale Repertory Theatre, and August Wilson was creating some of his early works. Richards was one of the most influential figures in modern American theater and a pioneering director who brought the plays of Lorraine Hansberry and August Wilson to Broadway. As a part of her training, she worked as a press and marketing associate during the world premiere of Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* at Yale Rep and the transfer of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* to Broadway.

During her tenure at Cornerstone, Ms. Wafer led the organization through significant growth. She oversaw the entire Faith-Based Cycle, a five-year theatrical exploration of how faith unites and divides communities, as well as the inception of the new Justice Cycle. Cornerstone is a leader in community based art making and Wafer played a critical role in making certain diverse community members are engaged in all aspects of the creative process.

Ms. Wafer graduated from Howard University with a bachelor's degree in Human Development and also from Yale University, School of Drama, with a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Management. Prior to her work in nonprofit management, she taught preschool and kindergarten in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles and Compton, Calif.

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About the August Wilson Center for African American Culture

The August Wilson Center for African American Culture preserves, presents and interprets the art, culture and history of African Americans in western Pennsylvania and people of African descent throughout the world. The Center realizes its mission through an engaging schedule of visual and performing arts presentations as well as education and public programs.

The Center is involved in a \$35.9 million Capital Campaign to build a new facility located at Liberty Avenue, Tenth Street and William Penn Place in Pittsburgh's Downtown. More than a museum, the multidisciplinary arts center will be reflective of all aspects of African American culture. Opening in early 2009, the Center's striking, two-story, green building will house exhibition galleries, a 479-seat theater for performances in all disciplines, an education center, a café and gift shop, and multipurpose spaces for community programs and events.

More information is available on the Center's Web site at www.AugustWilsonCenter.org or by calling 412.258.2700.