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PRESS RELEASE

August Wilson Center for African American Culture President Neil Barclay to Leave Pittsburgh for Prestigious Atlanta Post

Interim Leader to be Named Soon as National Search Commences

PITTSBURGH, PA—May 27, 2009—Oliver W. Byrd, Chairperson of the Board of Directors for the August Wilson Center for African American Culture, today announced that Neil A. Barclay, the Center’s President and CEO since 2003, is leaving Pittsburgh to become CEO and Executive Producer of the internationally known National Black Arts Festival (NBAF) in Atlanta. Mr. Barclay will be present for the August Wilson Center’s preview for the community on May 30 as well as for the world premiere tribute ceremony and celebration this September.

In announcing this leadership succession, Mr. Byrd said that the Board intends to soon appoint an interim President while a national search is conducted for Mr. Barclay’s successor. This will allow Mr. Barclay to assist in the leadership transition before officially leaving his post.

“It seems natural to make a change in leadership now as our region’s newest cultural asset enters the next phase of building onto what Neil Barclay has helped us accomplish in terms of our new facility and introductory programming,” said Oliver Byrd. “On behalf of our Board and the cultural community, we are grateful to Neil for his contributions in creating a new arts organization and destination for Pittsburgh and wish him well in his new position,” added Mr. Byrd.

In commenting on his planned departure, Neil Barclay said, “In recent years I have been deeply inspired by the life and work of August Wilson. It has been a profound and humbling privilege to have played a part in the creation of the Center that bears his name. Like August, my muse has been the great artists, educators and historians of our time whose work will be immeasurably enhanced by the one-of-a-kind facility, which officially opens just prior to my departure this fall. In accepting the leadership of the nation's premier celebration of African Diasporic culture in Atlanta, I quite simply return to working more intimately with my first loves - artists and the development of creative capital. I will always be grateful, however, to this great city and its remarkably generous citizens for the many blessings they have bestowed upon me.”

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Among his many accomplishments as President and CEO of the August Wilson Center, Mr. Barclay oversaw the design and construction of a world-class cultural center that will be a major attraction for Pittsburgh, helped to raise \$34.5 million toward the Center's Capital Campaign, grew the organization's operating budget to more than \$2.5 million annually, and produced five seasons of critically acclaimed visual and performing arts programming.

The interim President will lead the Center in its inaugural 2009/2010 season along with the existing senior leadership team of Jeffrey J. Anderson, Senior Vice President, Shay Wafer, Vice President of Programs, and Michael J. Mingrone, Senior Director of Development. "We are fortunate to have these talented, capable, hardworking and dedicated senior staff in place to help lead the August Wilson Center in its opening year," Mr. Byrd said.

The public will have an opportunity to take a first look at the brand-new August Wilson Center building at a free Community Open House Preview on Saturday, May 30, from 10 am to 5 pm. This festive, block party-style event will feature facility tours, children's craft activities, storytellers, art and food markets, and a full day of entertainment inside and outside the Center.

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About the August Wilson Center for African American Culture

Named for Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright and Hill District native August Wilson, the August Wilson Center for African American Culture engages regional and national audiences in its mission of preserving, presenting, interpreting, celebrating and shaping the art, culture and history of African Americans in Western Pennsylvania and people of African descent throughout the world.

Located in Downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District, the multidisciplinary August Wilson Center is reflective of all aspects of African American culture. The Center's striking, two-story, green building houses seven exhibition galleries, a 486-seat theater for performances in all disciplines, an education center, a café and gift shop, and multipurpose spaces for community programs and events. The Center is among a select few African American cultural institutions presenting visual and performing arts, the humanities and educational programs in a state-of-the-art venue.

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