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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August Wilson Center Announces 2010/2011 Fellows

PITTSBURGH, PA—August 27, 2010—The August Wilson Center for African American Culture has selected its Fellows for 2010/2011.

This is the second group of local artists chosen to participate in this unique fellowship program designed to give them access to a broad range of support systems allowing them to excel in their craft. Each will work on a self-identified project over a one-year period. The August Wilson Center will provide each Fellow with a generous stipend of up to \$10,000 and both administrative and creative support.

The Class of 2010/2011 August Wilson Center Fellows are:

Luqmon A. Salaam—A poet, community organizer, youth developer, writer, essayist and self-defined “hip hop head and sometimes jazz head” who will complete a digital release of a spoken word and music project. The compilation will represent a return to his passion following a 10-year recording hiatus.

“It is an honor and a responsibility to be involved with such a fellowship program, to have my name next to it. I hope to make life art that lives up to this selection.”

Tameka Cage-Conley—A literary artist, educator and scholar. She will use her Fellowship opportunity to support the completion of her first novel, *This Far, By Grace* and an interventionist readers' theater project.

“As a literary artist who has made creative writing my refuge since I was a child, I am honored and grateful to have received an award that bears the name of the literary genius August Wilson. As a Fellow, the Center will be a shelter for a project I believe will ignite social change, and a home where my ideas and words can flourish and take root in Pittsburgh, and with the help of this opportunity, reach the nation.”

Christiane D. Leach—A visual artist, performance poet, singer, songwriter, playwright, event producer and cultural instigator. She will use her Fellowship to explore songwriting and her voice, working with various musicians and producers to create a CD of alternative/neo-soul/rock music.

“I’m ecstatic. The moral and financial support of the Fellowship gives me the artistic opportunity to dream and shoot higher.”

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Amanda Lewis—A classically trained opera singer, who's been a featured performer at such prestigious events as the 10th Anniversary of the African American Civil War Memorial in Washington, DC, the Congressional Black Caucus's Black Women's Agenda in 2008 and the 2010 National Walk for Epilepsy. Lewis will undergo intense training in the opera field during her tenure and also serve as part of the production and development team for the August Wilson Center's co-production of *Gospel at Colonus* with Opera Theater Pittsburgh, scheduled for March 2011.

"I am excited, overwhelmed by the possibilities this opportunity will bring to my life and career. It's a blessing and essential as an artist to be surrounded by people who believe in you."

Alisha Wormsley—A visual artist who works mostly in photography and multi-media installation, all based in cultural anthropology. During her Fellowship, she will be completing two works in progress: *Confusing Nostalgia* and a mixed media installation, *A photOpera: the transformation of Oshe* (the retelling of a Cuban myth that transcends Diaspora).

"I'm honored and thankful to be an August Wilson Fellow, his legacy has made a huge impact in my artistic life. This Fellowship will assist in my artistic practice greatly by giving me the time and support to finish two works in progress. I can't wait to get started."

James Ziegler—A gospel artist, who has shared the stage with such internationally known gospel luminaries as Tye Tribbett, Micah Stampley, JJ Hairston & Youthful Praise and Donnie McClurkin. He will utilize his Fellowship to record a gospel CD for national distribution.

"I'm not sure that I should admit it, but I was surprised when I first got the news that I was chosen as one of the AWC Fellows. I know the amount of talent this city has produced. To be counted among them was unexpected. However, I must say that I am very proud to have been recognized as a contributor to the creative and performing arts in Pittsburgh. I have much appreciation for the judging panel as well as the August Wilson Center Staff for granting me this tremendous opportunity."

The six Fellows were chosen after a review of 52 applications and panel interviews with 22 of the applicants. The final selections were made by a panel of seven regional arts professionals representing various disciplines. The panel met for 15 hours over a two-day period to make the final selections. The works of the second class of Fellows will be premiered as a part of our annual First Voice Festival in May 2011.

"The August Wilson Center Fellows program represents the best of what we are as an organization," said Shaunda Miles, Director of Programming & Cultivation for The Center. "It is a cornerstone program vital to our construction of the preeminent institution for African American Arts and Culture in the world."

"We are honored to work with such a talented cohort of Fellows," Miles added. "I know that both our programming and their development will be enhanced through the collaborative work that lie ahead and we anticipate great projects from each of the artists."

The August Wilson Center is deeply grateful to the earliest supporters of the fellows program, the Multi Cultural Arts Initiative, Pittsburgh Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and a generous anonymous donor.

Please contact Treshea N. Wade, manager of communications and e-marketing, at 412.338.8734 or twade@AugustWilsonCenter.org for any pictures or interview requests.

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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.