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**PRESS RELEASE**

**August Wilson Center for African American Culture lands former Jazz at Lincoln Center executive as new president and CEO**

**PITTSBURGH, PA—February 18, 2010—**The August Wilson Center for African American Culture today announced the appointment of André Kimo Stone Guess as its new president and chief executive officer. He succeeds Marva H. Harris, who has served as interim CEO since July 2009 and led the August Wilson Center during its grand opening in September of last year. Guess is expected to begin his new role on April 16, 2010.

The 43-year-old Louisville native is an internationally respected leader with more than two decades of combined experience in arts management, finance and non-profit executive leadership.

Oliver Byrd, chairperson of the Center's Board of Directors, describes Guess as "exactly the right person to lead us through our next phase after building such a magnificent cultural center for Pittsburgh – extending the mission and vision we have for this Center regionally, nationally and internationally." Byrd adds, "Andre not only embraces that vision, but also has the solid experience of running and sustaining a cultural entity along with a track record of impressive results."

Byrd cites as examples Guess' positions as vice president and producer, and director of finance and administration at Jazz at Lincoln Center from 2000-2006. Guess produced the first three seasons at Jazz at Lincoln Center's new home, Frederick P. Rose Hall in New York City. As director of finance and administration, he managed an annual budget in excess of \$12M, led strategic planning efforts and negotiated a loan of more than \$30M for Rose Hall.

Most recently, Guess has served as a consultant for GuessWorks, the firm he founded in 2006. GuessWorks, based in Montclair, New Jersey, is a management and consulting firm for non-profit institutions and performing artists. As a consultant, he has worked with many notable arts and culture institutions, foundations and consulting firms, including The Pew Charitable Trusts, William Penn Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, New York City Opera, AEA Consulting, Helicon Collaborative, Brooklyn Music School, Signature Theatre Company in New York City, the Esplanade Theatres on the Bay in Singapore and the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra locally. Also numbered among his clients are many world-renowned recording artists, including Christian McBride, Wynton Marsalis, Darin Atwater, Nicholas Payton, Marc Cary and Todd Williams.

Commenting on Guess' selection for the position, Wynton Marsalis, artistic director, Jazz at Lincoln Center, described his colleague as "a person with deep integrity and an unusual feel for how creative decisions can impact

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a community.” He adds, “Andre has an expansive vision of the universality of humanity and how African American culture has spoken to that universe.”

Prior to his work at Jazz at Lincoln Center, he was vice president of the Lincoln Foundation in Louisville, KY, an operating educational foundation providing programming for academically talented, economically disadvantaged youth. He also co-founded the Center for Educational and Social Policy Research at the University of Louisville.

"It is indeed an honor to be chosen as president and CEO of the August Wilson Center for African American Culture. My work has taken me all over the world and I can tell you the Center is truly a one-of-a-kind institution," Guess said upon accepting his new post. "Being firmly situated in the heart of the Cultural District of a city that has a deep and abiding passion for arts and culture positions the August Wilson Center to be a preeminent organization and model for others throughout the world. Guess says his work will "start at home" – in Pittsburgh – connecting and reconnecting with the region's vibrant individual artists, arts organizations and funders. "As we create the continuum of local, regional, national and international presence, the 'connective tissue' is the local artist past and present whose work charts the course," Guess adds. "That rich legacy and bright promise is what attracted me to this position in this city. I look forward to joining with the Board, staff and the Greater Pittsburgh community in continuing to bring forth the vision and mission of this world-class institution."

Guess is a voting member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (Grammys) and was the producer and/or executive producer of nine albums, one of which received a nomination for a Grammy. He also served as executive producer of two Jazz at Lincoln Center concerts whose "Live from Lincoln Center" broadcasts were nominated for Emmy Awards.

Guess earned his B.S. in economics from the University of Louisville with a minor in actuarial math. Advanced placement enabled him to move into post-graduate studies at the Ph.D. level. He has completed significant coursework towards a Ph.D. in urban and public affairs with a concentration in policy analysis and evaluation.

He and his wife, Cheryl Peterson Guess, have three children, Wynton Kelly Stone, 16; Kennedy Kehaulani, 13; and Morgan Leilani, 10.

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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](http://AugustWilsonCenter.org) and by calling 412.258.2700.