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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August Wilson Center Hosts Exhibition Celebrating African American and Latina Women Role Models From Across Pennsylvania

Traveling exhibit by Pennsylvania Commission for Women features 50 successful Pennsylvania women including 14 from Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH, PA—March 7, 2011—In keeping with Women’s History Month, the August Wilson Center for African American Culture will host ***Voices: African American and Latina Women in Pennsylvania Share Their Stories of Success*** from Wednesday, March 9 to Saturday, June 18, 2011.

The exhibition, which consists of a photograph and informational text panel for each of the 50 women, was adapted from the book with the same title published in 2006 by the Pennsylvania Commission for Women. Each of the women featured in the exhibit and in the book has reached the top of her field in law, medicine, communications, business, technology, the arts, education and government. Award-winning photographer Darcy Padilla took all the photographs. The books have been placed in every library and intermediate school in Pennsylvania.

The exhibit is located on the August Wilson Center’s first floor, in the Café.

“We are so proud to host such an exceptional exhibition that not only highlights visible role models in our community but also works to pull Pennsylvania together as a community,” said Shaunda Miles, The Center’s director of programming and cultivation. She added that the women, who represent a great cross section of industry and community accomplishments, are role models for everyone. “You don’t have to be a young African American or Latina woman to come in here and be inspired. The stories of these women reach everyone,” Ms. Miles said.

Leslie Stiles, former executive director of the Pennsylvania Commission for Women and current president of the board of directors for the Pennsylvania Governor’s Conference for Women spearheaded the book and subsequent exhibition. “It really gives young people hope that they can achieve because many of these women look like they do, and many of them came from very humble beginnings,” she said. Ms. Stiles added that research shows that young women, who have role models, are better able to avoid obstacles and focus on education and goal setting.

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Ms. Stiles said unlike the great women's history heroes who are often studied, most of the women in the exhibition are alive and able to visit schools and libraries and talk to young people about their experiences. "They're much more than beautiful pictures in a book," Stiles said. "They're real people who have achieved and continue to achieve in this state."

Among the Pittsburgh women featured in the exhibition is Grace Robinson, a State Farm agent and founder of Tomorrow's Future, Inc., a teen mentoring entrepreneur program.

"I felt a validation for my work and what I have done," she said of being included in the book and the exhibition. "If it brought attention to what we were doing to help the kids, and that helped us make it a better place for them, then I was fine with being recognized because I vowed I would help, I would give back."

Pittsburgh women featured in the book and exhibition are: Esther Bush, Cynthia A. Baldwin, Sylvia Joyce Barksdale, R. Yvonne Campos, Willa M. Doswell, Patricia I. Documet, the late Gwendolyn J. Elliott, Brenda L. Frazier, Pamela W. Golden, Rita Murillo, Grace Robinson, Cecile M. Springer, Karen Farmer White and Doris Carson Williams.

In conjunction with the exhibition and Women's History Month, The Center will sponsor the following programs:

Women's History Writing Contest

Deadline for the essay contest is 6pm March 21, 2011

An essay contest for high school students in grades 9 through 12. Essays will address the questions, "What woman in your life has served as your role model? Who is she, what does she do and what makes her special to you? What characteristics define her as a role model and how has she influenced your life?"

Role Models: Pittsburgh women share stories of success

3 pm March 26, 2011

Two of the Pittsburgh women featured in the exhibition and book, Cecile M. Springer and Doris Carson Williams, will share how they've overcome life's challenges and now stand as role models for African American women and girls. This program will also highlight the Women's History Writing Contest and will feature a reading of the winning essay.

For more information about either the essay contest or the program, the public can e-mail cultivation@AugustWilsonCenter.org or call 412.338.8730.

Voices will be on exhibit at The Center from through June 18, 2011 and is included with regular admission. The Center's hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11 am to 6 pm. Admission: Suggested donation is adults, \$5; seniors and students (with ID), \$3; AWC members and children ages 5 and under, free. For details, the public can call 412.258.2700, or visit AugustWilsonCenter.org.

The Center extends grateful appreciation to the following contributors of major support during the 2011 winter/spring season: Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Buhl Foundation and Henry C. Frick Education Fund, The Heinz Endowments, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Richard King Mellon Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts and The Pittsburgh Foundation.

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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, a cultivation 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.

The August Wilson Center – At The Center Of It All!

More information is available on The Center's website at AugustWilsonCenter.org and by calling 412.258.2700.