



**AUGUST WILSON AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER  
ANNOUNCES FIRST-EVER PERMANENT EXHIBITION  
DEDICATED TO THE LIFE OF  
PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT AUGUST WILSON AND  
IMPACT OF HIS BODY OF WORK**

**AUGUST WILSON: A WRITER'S LANDSCAPE Opens Late Fall 2020 in Celebration of the  
75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wilson's Birth**

February 18, 2020 – Pittsburgh, PA – The **August Wilson African American Cultural Center**, one of the largest non-profit cultural organizations in the country focused exclusively on the African American experience and the arts of the African diaspora, announced today that it will create ***August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape***, the first-ever exhibition dedicated to the life and works of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **August Wilson**. Opening in late fall 2020, the 1,800 square foot permanent exhibition will explore the people and places of Pittsburgh, where Wilson was born and raised, and which had a profound impact on shaping his worldview and inspiring his unprecedented 10-play *American Century Cycle*.

The August Wilson African American Cultural Center provides a platform for established and emerging artists of color whose work reflects the universal issues of identity that Wilson tackled and which still resonate today, and the organization's leadership had been considering how best to spotlight the playwright and his work since taking over two years ago. Presented in three sections, or acts, *August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape* will showcase the universal themes the prolific playwright tackled and the enduring relevance of his work through reproductions and artifacts from Wilson's life and notable productions of his work; elements that invite patrons to address the issues of race, representation, family, and community; and interactive digital components that showcase each play in the *American Century Cycle*.

Developed in partnership with Constanza Romero Wilson, Wilson's widow and executor of the August Wilson Estate, and longtime Wilson collaborator and Tony Award-winning scenic designer David Gallo, the Center is working with leading design firms, scholars, and local artists to create the exhibition. *August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape*, which will be free of charge and open daily, expands the non-profit organization's mission to offer programs and resources that advance Wilson's legacy, celebrate Black culture, and champion future innovators in arts and culture.

Leading design firm Eisterhold Associates Inc., whose work includes the Rosa Parks Museum in Alabama, the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum in Missouri, and the African American Museum in Philadelphia, will fabricate the exhibition, with support from Deeplocal, a Pittsburgh-based technical design firm. Generous support for *August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape* is provided by Allegheny Regional Asset District and the Hillman Foundation. In addition, the Center is collaborating with Dr. Sandra Shannon, Professor of African American Literature at Howard University and a Wilson scholar, as well as local historians to recreate the historic Hill District and provide vital information to demonstrate the many changes that the community has endured.

“In the past two years the Center has seen a remarkable period of growth. It has long been our goal to create a permanent exhibition that celebrates the life of August Wilson, the Pittsburgh community that inspired him, and the ways in which his work and the issues he tackled continues to speak to audiences around the globe,” said **Janis Burley Wilson, President and CEO of August Wilson African American Cultural Center**. “*A Writer’s Landscape* will extend his legacy even further and allow all who come to the Center to immerse themselves in his world and his art. I’m incredibly grateful to Constanza Romero Wilson for being an integral collaborator and partner, and to the Allegheny Regional Asset District and Hillman Foundation for their support in making this vision a reality.”

“It is my honor to work with Janis Burley Wilson and the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, to educate and enlighten visitors about the life and work of my late husband, playwright August Wilson,” said **Constanza Romero Wilson**. “While his roots were firmly planted in the culture and history of Pittsburgh’s historic Hill District, the humanity of his characters and the universality of his stories about love, honor, duty, and betrayal are still making an international impact today. With this permanent exhibit we hope to secure his legacy for many generations to come.”

Born and raised in Pittsburgh’s Hill District, Wilson drew his greatest inspiration from the city and its people. Many of his works in the *American Century Cycle*, which almost exclusively take place in Pittsburgh and represent each decade of the 1900s, were largely informed by Wilson’s observations of the environment that surrounded him.

To bring Wilson’s story to life, *August Wilson: A Writer’s Landscape* will guide visitors through three sections, or acts:

- **The Coffee Shop:** inspired by Eddie’s, a local eatery in the Hill District, where a young Wilson frequently went to observe the day-to-day interactions of its diners. He scrawled notes on napkins, which subsequently provided the basis for many of his characters and the inspiration for his storytelling;
- **The Office:** a replica of Wilson’s home office that will showcase his working environment and items that he prized, including his writing desk, manuscripts, books and records from his collection, generously donated by the Wilson Estate;
- **The Street:** A symbolic walk through Wilson’s *American Century Cycle*, “The Street” will feature a section dedicated to each of Wilson’s ten plays, utilizing video, props, and costumes from notable Broadway productions of his work; and will provide insights on the decades they are set in and events that took place in Pittsburgh and across the nation at those times. To illustrate the universality of his plays, this section will show all current and scheduled productions of his plays across the globe and invite visitors to share how Wilson has been a creative inspiration to them, highlighting how the issues and people he wrote about more than four decades ago continue to be timeless and relevant today.

“The August Wilson African American Cultural Center plays a vital role in our region’s cultural landscape and RAD is proud to support this permanent exhibition with a RADical ImPact Grant,” said **Daniel J. Griffin, Chairman of the Board of the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD)**. “These special, one-time grants were created in celebration of RAD’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and were awarded to 12 projects that will inspire our region for the next 25 years. *A Writer’s Landscape* will do just that, honoring the legacy and tenacity of one of our most celebrated artists, and inspiring a new generation through his work and history.”

“August Wilson’s legacy is so much a part of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh is so much a part of his work,” said **David K. Roger, President of the Hillman Foundation**. “We are pleased to support the August Wilson African American Cultural Center in designing this important exhibition that will highlight his imprint on literature and drama that is now celebrated around the world.”

To learn more about the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, its year-round activities, and *August Wilson: A Writer's Landscape*, please visit <https://aacc-awc.org/>.

#### **ABOUT AUGUST WILSON AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER**

The August Wilson African American Cultural Center is a non-profit multidisciplinary arts center located in Pittsburgh's cultural district that generates artistic, educational, and community initiatives that advance the legacy of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson. One of the largest cultural centers in the country focused exclusively on the African American experience and the celebration of Black culture and the African diaspora, the non-profit organization welcomes more than 80,000 visitors locally and nationally. Through year-round programming such as the annual Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival, Black Bottom Film Festival, AWCommunity Days, TRUTHSayers speaker series, and rotating art exhibits in its two galleries, the Center provides a platform for established and emerging artists of color whose work reflects the universal issues of identity that Wilson tackled and which still resonate today.

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#### **Media Contacts:**

Julie Danni / Daniel Rechtschaffen / Josh Balber

Resnicow and Associates

[Jdanni@resnicow.com](mailto:Jdanni@resnicow.com) / [Drechtschaffen@resnicow.com](mailto:Drechtschaffen@resnicow.com) / [Jbalber@resnicow.com](mailto:Jbalber@resnicow.com)

212-671-5173/5188/5175