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August Wilson Cultural Center Revisits Rebranding: Plans to Add “African American” to the Building Name

PITTSBURGH, March 21, 2019 – The August Wilson Cultural Center today announced that it is revisiting the Center’s rebranding following suggestions that the organization might consider restoring “African American” to the name.

The organization’s Board of Directors met recently and were unanimous in their support of suggestions by the Center’s leadership to include the words “African American” in the Center’s name. Support for various approaches came from allies and trusted advisors. While more people support the rebranding than those that don’t, the Center’s leadership wants to be mindful of various stakeholders in the community.

“We heard from our friends and allies the depth of feeling associated with having "African American" present in the institutional branding, and we believe it is an upside compromise to include it,” said Janis Burley Wilson, the Center’s President and CEO. “August Wilson’s name alone signifies a celebration of African American culture. Although the August Wilson Cultural Center name embodies the African American experience, we’re planning to incorporate “African American” back into the Center’s name. This direction allows more voices within Pittsburgh’s community to feel included, and for the mission, vision and incredible programming to once again take center stage.”

The Center’s name was initially modified out of necessity following its financial reorganization and the bankruptcy of the original company, and after the building was purchased under new ownership and leadership, severing ties with the previous organization. More recently, as a part of a relaunch, a new brand identity went up on the front of the Center’s Liberty Avenue facade and drew feedback expressing interest in having the words “African American” referenced in its branding.

The Board and management have agreed to amend the Center’s current name to: The August Wilson African American Cultural Center. The Center is excited to work with designers to develop the best options to depict this name on signage, marketing and promotional materials. The Center will begin to phase-in the new name and branding over the next several weeks.

Under the leadership of a nine-member Board of Directors comprised of business and community leaders, and with Janis Burley Wilson as president and CEO at the Center since 2017, the August Wilson Cultural Center is on solid ground in terms of programming, community engagement, capital improvements and a sustainable financial outlook. For the first time, the Center ended a year with a surplus and new capital improvements to the building are underway under Janis Burley Wilson's leadership.

Constanza Romero Wilson, wife of August Wilson and executor of the estate supports the current leadership. "August Wilson was an artist that very much looked toward the future with optimism and an impeccable trust in the power of the arts both as an instrument for change and as an affirmation of our common humanity. I am confident that he would embrace the vision and the mission of this organization." The Center is working closely with the estate on a large-scale initiative to honor August Wilson's legacy.

"The vision for this unique Center is on course with sound financial footing, solid leadership, and with dynamic and powerful plans for the future", said Michael Polite, Board Chair of the August Wilson Cultural Center. "This amendment to the Center's name honors August Wilson and the deep impact his work continues to have with the African American community and beyond."

About the August Wilson Cultural Center

The August Wilson Cultural Center is a venue dedicated to the presentation of art and culture reflective of African-Americans and the African Diaspora. It is located in Pittsburgh's Cultural District at [980 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222](https://www.augustwilsoncenter.org/980-Liberty-Avenue-Pittsburgh-Pennsylvania-15222). The "Center" offers multiple exhibition galleries, a 492-seat theater for performances, and spaces for classes, lectures and community events. It was designed by African-American architect, Allison Williams.

We would like to thank the Heinz Endowments, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Hillman Family Foundations, Allegheny Regional Asset District, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Eden Hall Foundation, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, and the Buhl Foundation for their support of our operations and programming, which helps to make our incredible performances possible.

The African American Cultural Center, identification number 47-2697273, is a tax-exempt, non-profit entity under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). The official registration and financial information for the African American Cultural Center may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.