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The Chicago August Wilson Monologue Competition Winners Announced

**Students from Nicholas Senn High School and
The Chicago High School for the Performing Arts
to represent Chicago in the national finals on Broadway**

Chicago, IL— **The League of Chicago Theatres, Goodman Theatre, the University of Illinois at Chicago and competition organizer Derrick Sanders** announce the top Chicago finalists for the 10th Annual August Wilson Monologue Competition, which were held Monday, March 4, 2019 at the Goodman Theatre: **Abad Viquez** of Nicholas Senn High School (first place), **Freedom Martin** of The Chicago High School for the Performing Arts (second place), **Serenity Saffold-Rice** of Interlochen Center for the Arts (third place), and **Lyk Singleton** of The Chicago High School for the Performing Arts (honorable mention).

Three Chicago finalists received cash scholarships and the first and second place winners will receive an all-expense paid trip to New York to compete in the finals on May 6, 2019 at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway. The winner of the Chicago finals is also awarded a partial scholarship to attend the University of Illinois Chicago's School of Theatre and Music. The top two finalists will receive additional coaching before competing in the national competition in New York, where they will participate in a weekend of activities and compete for the national title and cash prizes. In seven of the nine years, Chicago has had a student place in the top three national finalists.

The judges for the Chicago finals were **Sydney Chatman, Lydia Diamond, Chris Jones, Daniel Kyri** and **Gavin Lawrence**.

Twenty-two Chicago high school students competed in the finals of the 10th Annual **August Wilson Monologue Competition** for a chance to represent Chicago in the National Competition at the August Wilson Theatre in New York City. Hundreds of students competed across the city in preliminary rounds. The top two winners of the Chicago finals will compete in the National Finals at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway on Monday, May 6, 2019.

Competitors in the Finals included: Levi Donnel, Freedom Martin, Harmony Palmore, Jada Rice, Enama Samuels, Lyk Singleton, and Savaun Stokes of The Chicago High School for the Performing Arts; Dalencia Brown of DRW College Prep; Kinia Kinsey of the Advanced Arts Program at Gallery 37; Serenity Saffold-Rice of Interlochen Center for the Arts; Anonda Tyler of Kenwood Academy High School; Ja' Lah Griffin of King College Prep High School; Abad Viquez of Nicholas Senn High School; Cody Merridith of Perspectives Leadership Charter High School; Alexis Eiland and Bri' yon Watts of Southland College Prep; Yurithi Zavala of Thomas Kelly High School; Kezia Boohene and Rondale Hendricks of Thornwood High School; Dion Brown, Jaquese Copeland, and Kamyra Pittman of William Rainey Harper High School.

The August Wilson Monologue Competition is presented by **Goodman Theatre** and **Derrick Sanders**, in collaboration with the **Department of Performing Arts at The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)**, the **League of Chicago Theatres**, and **True Colors Theatre Company**. Open to Chicago area high school sophomores, juniors and seniors, the August Wilson Monologue Competition focuses on exposing students to the richness of August Wilson's *Century Cycle*



and incorporating the plays into the standard high school curriculum. Coordinator Derrick Sanders hopes to continue building robust partnerships with schools across Chicago, creating educational opportunities that allow students to connect to August Wilson and his work through the study of history, social studies and literature.

For the Chicago and National competition, students perform a 2-3-minute monologue of their choosing from one of the ten plays in August Wilson's *Century Cycle*. They are adjudicated by a panel of Chicago theatre professionals based on preparedness, understanding of the text, emotional connection to the material, and commitment to the performance. Event sponsor, Goodman Theatre, was the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in Wilson's acclaimed *Century Cycle*—including world premiere productions of *Seven Guitars* (1995) and *Gem of the Ocean* (2003).

Now in its tenth year, most students come to the competition through programs at their schools, after-school programs and education programs at local professional theatres. The work of AWMC Outreach expanded this year to include teacher/coach training sessions and five in-school residency programs for students. These programs were guided by Sanders and taught by several AWMC Alumni (Tiffany Fulson, Christian Helem and Angelica Masson) and master teachers of Wilson's work. Through the ten-week residency, students were led through all of the essential skills and objective criteria for performing his work. The students acquired an increased competence and confidence in analyzing and presenting Wilson's texts. Last year, due to these workshops and coaching sessions we had a student that had attended all the workshops placed in the National Finals in New York. Through this type of specific work, the AWMC can expand the scope of students by reaching schools not currently being served by theatres in Chicago. This year's AWMC Outreach Residencies were located at Young Women's Leadership Charter School, DRW College Prep, Perspectives Leadership Charter School, CICS ChicagoQuest, and Westinghouse College Prep High School.

The 2019 AWMC Chicago Preliminaries were held at Steppenwolf Theatre on February 11, the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts on February 12 and 14, and Victory Gardens Theater on February 13. The Semi-final competition was hosted by the UIC School of Theatre and Music on February 19, 2019. Regional competitions take place in twelve cities nationwide, including Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Haven, New York, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Dallas, and Greensboro.

The AWMC is made possible with support from **Allstate Insurance**.

For more information about the Chicago competition, visit: <https://chicagoplays.com/august-wilson-monologue-competition/>.

About the *Century Cycle*

August Wilson's *Century Cycle* is a singular achievement in American theatre. Each of the ten world-class plays is set in a different decade of the twentieth century. At the plays' core are soaring, lyrical monologues that take the rich song, laughter, and pain of the African American experience and place it in the mouths of the most varied ensemble of characters written since Shakespeare. The plays of the *Century Cycle* are: *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, and *Radio Golf*.

About Goodman Theatre

Called America's "Best Regional Theatre" by *Time* magazine, Goodman Theatre (Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schulfer) has won international recognition for its artists, productions and programs, and is a major cultural, educational and economic pillar in Chicago. Founded in 1925 by William O. Goodman and his family in honor of their son Kenneth, Goodman Theatre has garnered hundreds of awards for artistic achievement and community engagement, including: two Pulitzer Prizes, 22 Tony Awards (including "Outstanding Regional Theatre" in 1992), nearly 160 Joseph Jefferson Awards and more. Goodman Theatre, was the first theater in the world to produce all 10 plays in Wilson's acclaimed *Century Cycle*—including world premiere productions of *Seven Guitars* (1995) and *Gem of the Ocean* (2003). Visit GoodmanTheatre.org.

About Chicago theatre



Chicago theater is the leader in the U.S. with more than 250 theaters throughout Chicagoland, comprising a rich and varied community ranging from storefront, non-union theaters to the most renowned resident theaters in the country, including 5 which have been honored with Regional Tony Awards, and the largest touring Broadway organization in the nation. Chicago's theaters serve 5 million audience members annually and have a combined budget of more than \$250 million. Chicago produces and/or presents more world premieres annually than any other city in the nation. Last year alone Chicago theater companies produced more than 100 world premiere productions and adaptations. Each year Chicago theaters send new work to resident theaters across the country, to Broadway, and around the world.

League of Chicago Theatres' Mission Statement

Theatre is essential to the life of a great city and to its citizens. The League of Chicago Theatres is an alliance of theatres which leverages its collective strength to support, promote, and advocate for Chicago's theatre industry. Through our work, we ensure that theatre continues to thrive in our city.

For a comprehensive list of Chicago productions, visit the League of Chicago Theatres website, ChicagoPlays.com. Half-price tickets to the current week's performances as well as future performances are available at HotTix.org and at the two Hot Tix half-price ticket locations: across from the Chicago Cultural Center at Expo72 (72 E. Randolph) and Block Thirty Seven (108 N. State).

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