



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN THE 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AUGUST WILSON MONOLOGUE COMPETITION

### Chicago Finals: Monday, March 9 at the Goodman Theatre

Chicago, IL—Twenty-one Chicago high school students will compete in the finals of the 11<sup>th</sup> 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 finals will be held at the **Goodman Theatre, 170 N Dearborn on Monday, March 9, 2020 at 6:00 pm**. The August Wilson Monologue Competition is free and open to the public.

The top two winners of the Chicago finals will compete in the National Finals at the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway on Monday, May 4, 2020.

Competitors in the Finals include: **Harmony Palmore** of The Chicago High School for the Performing Arts; **Zianis Gomez** of CICS ChicagoQuest; **Dalencia Brown** and **Diane Texas** of DRW College Prep; **Brea Howard**, **Mena Sharkey** and **Cherish Ray** of Walter H. Dyett High School for the Arts; **Maral Chinbat** of the Advanced Arts Program at Gallery 37; **Anthony Hightower** of Kenwood Academy High School; **Demi Davis**, **Diniah Harris**, **Angel Rhone**, and **Ada Roberts** of Nicholas Senn High School; **Mia Mack Neal** of Perspectives Leadership Charter High School; **Julissa Contreras** of Prosser Career Academy High School; **Island Washington** of Simeon Career Academy High School; **Nyah Ware** and **Bri'Yon Watts** of Southland College Prep; **Yurithi Zavala** of Thomas Kelly High School; and **Zakkiyah Steward** and **Travion O'neil** of William Rainey Harper High School.

Judges for the Chicago finals are **Kelvin Roston Jr.**, **James Vincent Meredith**, **Sydney Chatman**, **Pemon Rami** and **Rebecca Rugg**

**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 competition gives students an opportunity to explore and share 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).



Three Chicago finalists will receive cash scholarships and the first and second place winners will receive an all-expense paid trip to New York to compete in the finals. 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 around the competition and national prizes including monetary awards and scholarship opportunities. In eight of the ten years, Chicago has had a student place in the top three national finalists.

Now in its eleventh 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 this year included teacher/coach training sessions and six 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. 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, Westinghouse College Prep High School and Michelle Clark Academic Prep.

The 2020 AWMC Chicago Preliminaries were held at Victory Gardens Theatre on February 10, the Black Ensemble Theatre on February 11, the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts on February 13. The Semi-final competition was hosted by The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) on February 24, 2020. Regional competitions take place in twelve cities nationwide, including Atlanta, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Dallas, Greensboro, Los Angeles, New Haven, New York, Norfolk, Pittsburgh, Portland, San Diego, and Seattle.

Chicago's August Wilson Monologue Competition is sponsored by **Allstate Insurance Company and the Chadwick Boseman Foundation**

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](http://GoodmanTheatre.org).

### **About Chicago theatre**

Chicago theatre is the leader in the U.S. with more than 250 theatres throughout Chicagoland, comprising a rich and varied community ranging from storefront, non-union theatres to the most renowned resident theatres in the country, including 5 which have been honored with Regional Tony Awards, and the largest touring Broadway organization in the



nation. Chicago's theatres 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 theatre companies produced more than 100 world premiere productions and adaptations. Each year Chicago theatres send new work to resident theatres 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](http://ChicagoPlays.com). Half-price tickets to the current week's performances as well as future performances are available at [HotTix.org](http://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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