



Dear Friends,

Like many of you, I am looking forward to brighter days. As we continue to practice social distancing, the most important step we can collectively take to protect ourselves and our community, it's important that we find comfort in one another and look ahead to when we can come together once more.

At the August Wilson African American Cultural Center, many of us mark the beginning of summer at the Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival. In its first 10 years, the festival has become a hallmark of our city, a beacon for some of the world's greatest musicians, and a destination for their most devoted fans. However, your health and safety—along with the health and safety of our staff and the musicians—remain our highest priority.

**Therefore, we have made the difficult but necessary decision to postpone this year's Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival, presented with Citizens Bank, to a later date that we will be announcing in the coming weeks.** While we are heartbroken that we cannot begin the summer at the Center listening to Chaka Khan, Dianne Reeves, Chico Freeman, among many others, I'm thrilled to share that the lineup will remain the same, and we'll be providing additional details as soon as we can.

In the meantime, the August Wilson African American Cultural Center is rolling out a number of new online initiatives to reach you where you are. We are working on some exciting plans to bring jazz directly to you to enjoy on what would have been the launch of the festival (June 18), and we will share more details in the coming weeks. We've also launched the first-ever virtual tours of our two most recent visual arts exhibitions that closed early in response to COVID-19: *Vanishing Black Bars & Lounges: Photographs by L. Kasimu Harris* and *I came by Boat so Meet me at the Beach: Ayana M. Evans and Tsedaye Makonnen*. These are eye-opening exhibitions by remarkably talented artists, and you can view them by clicking [here](#).

Beginning on April 27, in celebration of what would have been August Wilson's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and continuing on the final Friday of each month thereafter, we'll be presenting *Lit Fridays*, a new conversation series. The first session will feature actors Ruben Santiago-Hudson and Nathan James, poet jessica Care moore, and August Wilson scholar Dr. Sandra Shannon in conversation with our Curator of Literary Programs Deesha Philyaw. The Center has always taken inspiration from Wilson's legacy, and now more than ever it is critical that we support the artists and innovators who speak to the universal truths to which Wilson devoted his career.

We will continue to share updates and additional information on our website and social media channels, and I encourage you to be in touch by emailing me at [info@aacc-awc.org](mailto:info@aacc-awc.org) with any questions you may have. We look forward to once again opening our doors and celebrating those summer days with you.

Sincerely,

Janis Burley Wilson