



August Wilson Society's
Biennial Colloquium:
**Excavating New
Critical Landscapes
for August Wilson Studies**

March 2-4, 2023

CO-PRESENTED BY



WELCOME

The August Wilson Society (AWS), in collaboration with the August Wilson African American Cultural Center (AWAACC) and University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS), welcomes you to its Biennial Colloquium: *Excavating New Critical Landscapes for August Wilson Studies*, marking the grand opening of the August Wilson Archive at the University of Pittsburgh.



The **August Wilson Society** is a multidisciplinary community of educators, visual and performing artists and practitioners, students, and theatre lovers who remain dedicated to commemorating August Wilson's legacy by promoting the studying, teaching, researching, performing, and ultimately the safeguarding of the rich narrative of the African American past that Wilson has bequeathed to us in the form of 10 plays that chronicle the stories of African Americans from 1904 to 1997.

SCHEDULE

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Day 1

6:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Complimentary Breakfast
for guests staying at the Drury Hotel

9:00 – 9:15 a.m.

Guests walk from Drury Hotel to
AWS Colloquium site at AWAACC,
980 Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15222

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Colloquium Registration/Check-in
at AWAACC Main Entrance on Liberty Ave.

Coffee set-up at AWAACC
for Colloquium attendees

9:45 – 10:00 a.m.

All guests seated in the AWAACC Theatre

AWS Colloquium Welcome and Remarks:

Dr. Sandra Shannon

President, August Wilson Society

Constanza Romero Wilson

Executive Director, August Wilson Legacy, LLC

Kornelia Tancheva, PhD

Director, University of Pittsburgh Library System

Janis Burley Wilson

President and CEO,
August Wilson African American Cultural Center

Thursday, March 2, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Location: AWAACC Theatre

PLENARY I: Encounters in the August Wilson Archive

This opening session brings together scholars, artists, educators, and students to reflect on the personal, intellectual, and artistic importance of the August Wilson Archive. Panelists will respond to materials they encounter in the collection and illuminate the ways they help deepen our understanding of Wilson's life and work and its relation to the larger socio-historical record.

Moderator:

Isaiah Matthew Wooden, Swarthmore College

Panelists:

Eric M. Glover, Yale University School of Drama

Book By: The Playwright's Foray into the Musical

Omiyemi (Artisia) Green, William and Mary

In the "blood" of the American Century Cycle

Victoria Nicole LaFave, University of Pittsburgh

"I like working with you": The Dramaturg in the Archive

Khalid Y. Long, University of Georgia

Wilson, Blues, and Black Nationalism Revisited

Ladrica Menson-Furr, University of Memphis

"It's more than a notion.": August Wilson's South

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Guided Tours of August Wilson: The Writers Landscape

Vendors Market

Location: AWAACC Davenport Lobby

Lunch

(On our own)

Thursday, March 2, 2023

2:10 – 3:35 p.m.

Location: AWAACC Highmark Room

PLENARY II: Digging the August Wilson Archive

"Without archives many stories of real people would be lost, and along with those stories, vital clues that allow us to reflect and interpret our lives today." –Sara Sheridan

Having spent significant time examining items in the August Wilson Archive, these scholars dug up clues to understanding unexplored areas of critical inquiry about Wilson's influences.

Moderator:

Omiyemi (Artisia) Green, William and Mary

Panelists:

Shaun Myers, University of Pittsburgh

Archival Flows: Speculating Wilson, Harris, and Wideman in Conversation

John Merritt, University of California, Los Angeles

Lloyd Richards in the August Wilson Archive

Laurence Glasco, University of Pittsburgh

Friends and Fellow Poets: How Rob Penny Shaped August Wilson's Persona, Poetry, and Plays

Thursday, March 2, 2023

3:35 to 4:55 p.m.

Location: AWAACC Multipurpose Studio

**PLENARY III: August Wilson: The Writer's Landscape:
Preserving the Work of August Wilson as Black Culture
Bearer (Concept, Content, Curation, Creative Genius, Community Impact)**

"If we are to preserve culture, we must continue to create it."
—Johan Huizinga

This roundtable discussion reveals the vision, tenacity, and skill that went into the making of *August Wilson: The Writer's Landscape*, the first-ever exhibition dedicated to the life and works of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson. Participants include top-notch specialists in their respective fields.

Moderator:

Olga George, KDKA-TV

Participants:

Emmai Alaquiva

Emmy Award-Winner, Film Director, Photographer

Constanza Romero

Executive Director, August Wilson Legacy, LLC
Curator of *August Wilson: The Writer's Landscape*

Sandra G. Shannon, PhD

Content Specialist, *August Wilson: The Writer's Landscape*
President, August Wilson Society

Josh Tillotson

Project Manager, Eisterhold Associates

Janis Burley Wilson

Co-Curator of *August Wilson: The Writer's Landscape*
President and CEO, August Wilson African American
Cultural Center

Thursday, March 2, 2023

6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

**Location: Rivers Club, 301 Grant St., Suite 411
Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

RIVERS CLUB OPENING RECEPTION

Colloquium participants and special guests are invited to cap off the day and continue to network, enjoy fine dining, and listen to great music just down the block at the Rivers Club Reception and Fundraiser. Registration required.

Friday, March 3, 2023

Day 2

6:00 – 8:00 a.m.

Complimentary Breakfast for guests staying at the Drury Hotel

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

Coffee set-up at AWAACC for Colloquium attendees

8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

Location: AWAACC Multipurpose Studio

PLENARY IV: Performing August Wilson

"The essence of performing Wilson is not simply bringing life to the stage, but rather bringing the truth of life to the stage."
—Stephen McKinley Henderson

This session will delve into various new landscapes that emerge in bringing Wilson's American Century Cycle plays to stages in America and across the globe.

Moderator:

Khalid Long, University of Georgia

Panelists:

Lynette Goddard, Royal Holloway, University of London
Directing August Wilson's American Century Cycle for the
London Stage: Paulette Randall's Productions of *The Piano*
Lesson and *Fences*

Friday, March 3, 2023

Malik Washington

Unaffiliated Writer

Transiting August Wilson's Black Geographies: Practices in Re-Membering Time/Place

Pedro Alvarado

Independent Scholar

Charles Family Agency and Religious Symbolism in August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*

10:05 – 10:40 a.m.

Location: AWAACC Theatre

PLENARY V: Keynote Address

Ruben Santiago-Hudson

Actor, Director, Playwright, Wilsonian Warrior



Ruben's Broadway production of *Jitney* garnered several awards for Outstanding Revival including the Tony Award and six Tony nominations. He recently adapted August Wilson's play *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* for Netflix. The film was produced by Denzel Washington, directed by George C. Wolfe, and stars Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman.

Moderator:

Sandra G. Shannon, PhD, President, August Wilson Society

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Guided Tours of August Wilson: The Writers Landscape

Vendors Market

Location: AWAACC Davenport Lobby

Explore Downtown Pittsburgh

Lunch

(On our own)

Friday, March 3, 2023

2:10 – 3:35 p.m.

Location: AWAACC Highmark Room

PLENARY VI: Black Archives Matter

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." –Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Through their experiences with Johnson Publishing Company Archives and other collections, this panel of seasoned archivists will discuss why Black archives are crucial to understanding American history and culture, why living artists should create and maintain archival materials, how artists' archives can document local, regional, and national histories, and what are the ethics and methodologies involved in archival research today?

Moderator:

Aaron Bryant, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Panelists:

Steven D. Booth

Getty Research Institute

Johnson Publishing Company Archives, Archivist

LeRonn P. Brooks

Getty Research Institute

Johnson Publishing Company Archives, Co-Curator

Aaron Bryant

Smithsonian National Museum of African American

History and Culture, Johnson Publishing Company Archives, Co-Curator

Deidre Cross

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Director of Public Programs

Friday, March 3, 2023

3:35 – 4:55 p.m.

Location: AWAACC Multipurpose Studio

PLENARY VII: Gems of Generational Knowledge

"What do you do with your legacy, and how do you best put it to use?"
–August Wilson

This session underscores August Wilson's belief—indeed his insistence—that adults and elders are obligated to pass along their acquired knowledge to the next generation. Evidence of this conviction runs throughout his American Century Cycle plays.

Moderator:

Shaun Myers, University of Pittsburgh

Panelists:

Dale Byam, Brooklyn College, CUNY
The Griot is the Archive!

Shayla Atkins, Montgomery College,
Finding the "I" in Exhibits: Teaching Self-Reflection, Subjectivity, and Voice in Museum Visits

Jessica Cory, Western Carolina University
August Wilson's Place in Affrilachian and Appalachian Literature

5:10 – 6:30 p.m.

Guided Tours of August Wilson: The Writers Landscape

Vendors Market

Location: AWAACC Davenport Lobby

Friday, March 3, 2023

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Location: AWAACC Café

AWS COLLOQUIUM RECEPTION

Salute to Wilsonian Warriors

At the close of Day 2 of the AWS Colloquium, participants will enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres and mingle just before the 7:30 p.m. performance of *How I Learned What I Learned*. During this time, AWS Board members will preside over a Salute to Wilsonian Warriors, a select group of living and transitioned artists who have worked with August Wilson, performed in, or directed his plays, and who played major roles in shaping the playwright's craft and career. This reception will be favored by live music from EntourageJazz*. Reception Catering provided by First Class Catering.

7:30 – 10:30 p.m.

Location: AWAACC's Theatre

LIVE PERFORMANCE: August Wilson's *How I Learned What I Learned* by noted Pittsburgh Wilsonian Warrior actor Wali Jamal

A Pittsburgh native like August Wilson, Wali is committed to furthering the legacy and afterlife of Wilson's work. He is the only actor in the world to have appeared in all eleven of Wilson's plays: each of the 10-play Century Cycle and Wilson's autobiographical one-man play *How I Learned what I Learned*.

Post-performance Entertainment by EntourageJazz
Location: AWAACC Café

*For more than twenty years, EntourageJazz has specialized in performing straight head Jazz, Blues, R&B and Gospel favorites to a wide variety of music lovers! As native sons of Pittsburgh, their eclectic group of classically trained musicians boasts the influence of "Pittsburgh Jazz".

August Wilson's *How I Learned What I Learned*

(And How What I Learned Has Led Me to Places I've Wanted to Go. That I have Sometimes Gone Unwillingly is the Crucible in Which Many a Work of Art Has Been Fired.)

Co-conceived by Todd Kreidler

Directed by and Starring Wali Jamal



Wali Jamal Actor, Playwright,
and Wilsonian Warrior

Creative Team

Wali Jamal: Director and Performer

Stephanie Rolland: Creative Producer/AWAACC Theatre Curator

Taylor Barfield: *Beyond the Red Door* Series Dramaturg

Brian Starks: Production Associate

A Hero's Beginnings by Taylor Barfield

If August Wilson—the playwright who created the epic American Century Cycle—was a superhero, then *How I Learned What I Learned* would be his origin story. In collaboration with his longtime assistant Todd Kreidler, Wilson performed the first production of his solo show at Seattle Repertory Theatre in 2003. When he learned he was sick in 2005, Wilson gave Kreidler his blessing to continue working on the play after he passed. Eight years after Wilson's untimely death, Kreidler fashioned the script into the form you will see today. The stories and lessons embedded in *How I Learned What I Learned* gave Wilson a foundation that he used to walk down the road that was, as he wrote it, "burnished with art & small, irrevocable tragedies."

Beyond the Red Door, a new, year-long, theatrical event series, draws from the creative process, practice, and themes of the Center's name-sake, August Wilson. From immersive theatrical experiences to artist workshops, musical performances, and food tastings, *Beyond the Red Door* will bring together local and national artists to offer exciting, new portals into Wilson's artistry. www.awaacc.org.

SAVE THE DATE

Next Event in *Beyond the Red Door*:

Wednesday, April 26th

A Taste of the American Century

"A unique foodie experience marinated in August Wilson's ten-play, 'American Century Cycle'"

Saturday, March 4, 2023

Day 3

7:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Complimentary Breakfast for guests staying at the Drury Hotel

Coffee set-up at AWAACC for Colloquium attendees

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Location: AWAACC Highmark Room

PLENARY VIII: New Landscapes for August Wilson Studies

"The August Wilson Archive is our most important archive to date, and we believe it will present innumerable opportunities for local, national, and international researchers to create new knowledge, and for our faculty and students' teaching and learning in a variety of disciplines, schools, and departments." –Dr. Kornelia Tancheva, Director of the University of Pittsburgh Library System and Hillman Librarian

Without question, the August Wilson Archive is an absolute boon to August Wilson Studies. Speakers in this session will shed light on several uncharted areas it opens for further research and critical inquiry.

Moderator:

Ladrica Menson-Furr, University of Memphis

Panelists:

Iyanna Hamby, University of California, Los Angeles

Mythic Configurations of the Vessel in *Gem of the Ocean* and *Reckoning with Recovery*

Don Mitchel, Delta State University

"One, Two, You Know What to Do ..." Dwight Andrews and The Blues of August Wilson

Kristen Feigel, Northern Illinois University

From Backstage to the Spotlight: Minor Female Characters in August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*

Saturday, March 4, 2023

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Location: AWAACC Multipurpose Studio

PLENARY IX: New Landscapes for Black Theatre

"As American playwrights absorb the influence of television and use new avenues of approach to the practice of their craft, they will grow to be wildly inventive and imaginative in creating dramas that will guide and influence contemporary life for years to come."

–August Wilson, *The Ground on Which I Stand* speech (1996)

As Wilson predicted in words that continue to resonate, today's creative landscape presents infinite possibilities for black playwrights and for black theatre, in general. Buoyed by Wilson's prophetic vision, this session will explore how they are cultivating this new ground.

Moderator:

Eric Glover, Yale University

Panelists:

Alyssa Darreya Smith, University of Iowa

August Wilson's Stage: Informing Renaissance Archival Practice

Johnny Jones, Simmons College of Kentucky

Lou Bellamy's Prevalence and Michele Shay's Presence in August Wilson's American Century Cycle

Shannon McMullen, Glenbard North High School

'Call Me the Mother of the Blues, That's All Right with Me': Body Commodification as a Gateway to Feminine Power and Selfhood in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*

Saturday, March 4, 2023

12 Noon – 12:45 p.m.

Location: AWAACC Multipurpose Studio

AWS 2023 COLLOQUIUM WRAP UP

Closing Remarks, Survey, Logistics for Closing Reception

1:00 – 3:30 p.m

**Location: August Wilson House, 1727 Bedford Ave.,
Pittsburgh, PA 15219**

**AWS COLLOQUIUM CLOSING RECEPTION & GUIDED
TOUR OF AUGUST WILSON HOUSE**

The August Wilson Society's 2023 Biennial Colloquium will conclude with a reception at August Wilson House and a tour of his newly restored childhood home and informal discussion of how it fits into the roots and heart of his plays. Reception guests with time and interest will be taken on a one-hour tour of August Wilson's Hill, with reference to the imagined/real sites of the fictional plays, August Ester's address, sites important in his life, etc.

Transportation details from AWAACC to the reception at August Wilson House to be announced.

This ends the August Wilson Society's 2023 Biennial Colloquium.

Thank you for attending.

SAFE TRAVELS!

August Wilson Society's Biennial Colloquium:

THANK YOU TO OUR CO-PRESENTER



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



HOWARD
UNIVERSITY



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Pittsburgh | Library System

SPECIAL THANKS TO

AWAACC Team including: Janis Burley Wilson, Shane Richardson, Adrienne Redwood, Stephanie Rolland, Taylor Barfield, Orlando Watson, Cydney Nunn

AWS Colloquium Planning Team including: Melda Beaty, Michael Dinwiddie, Ernest C. Jackson, Olga George, John Merritt, Sandra Shannon

Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts, Howard University

The University of Pittsburgh Library System Team including: Dr. Kornelia Tancheva, Ed Galloway, Michael Thompson, William Daw, Diael Thomas

Monica Watt Design Group

EntourageJazz

RRD Pittsburgh