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Press Contact: Joe Trentacosta

212.354.4660 fax 212.354.7588 joe@springerassociatespr.com

The American National Theatre FOUNDERS' CELEBRATION

Honoring

AUGUST WILSON

with

The American National Theatre Arthur Miller Founders' Award

Monday, May 9, 2005

At Dodger Stages

New York, NY—The American National Theatre, Inc. (*Sean Cullen, Founder and President of ANT*) will host its first **Founders' Celebration** on **Monday, May 9th, 2005** at the **Dodger Stages** (World Wide Plaza, 50th & 8th Ave.)

Paul NEWMAN and **Joanne WOODWARD** are the Honorary Co- Chairs of the event, which will begin with a champagne VIP reception at 6PM, followed by the “**Voices of America**” program at 7PM, and capping-off with a cocktail celebration till 9PM. Tony-winners **Donna MURPHY** and **Elizabeth FRANZ**, and Tony-nominee **Zeljko IVANEK** are scheduled to appear, along with other special guests.

The “Voices of America” program, directed by Tony-nominee **Randal MYLER**, will feature short new works from playwrights and composers from across the U.S., and will culminate with a tribute to the great American playwright, **August WILSON**, who will be awarded **The American National Theatre Arthur Miller Founders' Award**.

The “Voices of America” program is inspired by **The American National Theatre mission**: To annually identify, present and celebrate the most excellent and distinguished new American plays and musicals with their original companies and creative teams at a theatre center in New York. The ANT seeks to renew interest and respect for live American theatre for audiences from around the world, by showcasing the work of America’s nonprofit theatres and theatre artists.

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The ANT Founders' Committee includes: Kevin BACON, Blair BROWN, Kathleen CHALFANT, Elizabeth FRANZ, Victor GARBER, Ben GAZZARA, Zeljko IVANEK, Hugh JACKMAN, Julianna MARGULIES, Donna MURPHY, Harold PRINCE, Marty RICHARDS, and Monty SILVER.

The American National Theatre Arthur Miller Founders' Award, named in recognition of the late American master who had publicly supported The ANT from its inception, will be awarded annually to an individual who has distinguished themselves by making a significant contribution to the advancement of the American theatre.

"Having seen and been so moved by Mr. Wilson's extraordinary plays, I am most grateful for the opportunity for our organization to recognize his artistry with our first ANT Founders' Award. His voice – like Mr. Miller's -- is an American original, but his plays and characters speak to that which is universal in every human being. We are honored by Mr. Wilson's support of The American National Theatre, as we are forever indebted to him for the overwhelming power and depth of his work." ***Sean Cullen, ANT President***

This event will help fund **The American National Theatre Festival** set for June 2006, in New York City. The three-day Festival will feature readings of six new works that have been originally produced by ANT member theatres during the 2004 and 2005 seasons. One of these six featured presentations will be selected for a full production in New York City during the fall of 2006. All ANT presentations will transfer to The American National Theatre as they first appeared at their originating theatre.

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The American National Theatre's Founders' Celebration

Monday May 9th, 2005

Dodger Stages

(World Wide Plaza, 50th Street, between 8th.& 9th Avenues)

6PM - Champagne VIP Reception featuring musicians from the Juilliard School

7PM - "Voices of America" Program at

8PM - Cocktail Celebration featuring Warren Vachè Quartet

Tickets:

\$250 for Champagne VIP Reception and Priority Seating

\$125 for Cocktails and Presentation

For more information please call 1.888.277.6072 or contact

m.wuthrich@americannationaltheatre.org

Tickets may be purchased by sending a check to:

The American National Theatre, Inc.

PO Box 973, Cathedral Station, NYC, 10024

Seating is Limited!

For more information please visit www.AmericanNationalTheatre.com.

Your coverage is appreciated!

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AUGUST WILSON (*Playwright*) is the author of *Gem of the Ocean*, *Jitney*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars* and *King Hedley II*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African Americans, decade by decade, over the course of the 20th century. Mr. Wilson's work has garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*, a Tony Award for *Fences* and seven New York Drama Critics Circle Awards. The cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a Grammy, and Mr. Wilson received an Emmy nomination for *The Piano Lesson*. Early works include the one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*. Mr. Wilson has received several fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships, a Whiting Writers Award, a 1999 National Humanities Medal from the President of the United States, and numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He's an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and was a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.