

The N.C. Black Rep appoints artistic director

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The North Carolina Black Repertory Company's Board of Directors has announced the appointment of award-winning director, playwright, actor, and novelist Jackie Alexander as the Theatre's new Artistic Director. He succeeds Mabel Robinson who retired in December 2015.

Alexander's relationship with NCBRC began in 2005 when he directed John Shévin Foster's "Plenty of Time" at The National Black Theatre Festival. He went on to direct productions at the 2009, 2011, and 2015 festivals, as well as directing and producing his play, the "High Priestess of Dark Alley," for NCBRC in 2010. Alexander served as Artistic Director for the legendary Billie Holiday Theatre in New York from 2013-2015. During his

tenure, BHT was awarded a prestigious Mellon Grant, the first private funding awarded to the theatre in over 30 years, and was nominated for an astounding 17 AUDELCO awards for excellence in Black Theatre, taking home the top prize nine times.

The author of six plays, Alexander's work has been produced off-Broadway and regionally throughout the country. The Billie Holiday Theatre dedicated an entire season to his work by commissioning him to write three new plays for their 2010-2011 season, the only playwright in the Theatre's 44-year history to receive such an honor. As a filmmaker, Alexander's debut film "Joy" was honored with a Best Feature Film Award by The Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, and his debut novel, "Our Daily Bread," was published



Alexander

an Artistic Director, playwright, author, actor and filmmaker. We look forward to Mr. Alexander continuing the excellent artistic reputation for which the company is nationally noted."

by Turner Publishing in the fall of 2012.

Board President Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin is thrilled to have Alexander on board, stating: "Mr. Alexander brings a wealth of experience as

As Artistic Director, Alexander will focus on expanding programming at NCBRC with work that is both artistically challenging and socially conscious, while building upon the rich legacy of the company's world renowned National Black Theatre Festival. Alexander will also look to widen NCBRC's audience base by producing work that cuts across cultural, economic, and generational divides. He notes, "Winston-Salem has a large faith-based community, and is The City of Arts and Innovation. With our 2016-2017 season, NCBRC hopes to find common ground between these two bedrocks."

NCBRC's 2016-2017 theatre season will be announced July 15, 2016.

CDI director leaving post for teaching position at WSSU

Pamela L. Jennings will be tenured professor of innovation and entrepreneurship



Jennings

the curricula of its partner institutions and to explore strategic partnerships for the center in the design and technology industries," English added.

Jennings, who has been

director of CDI since Oct. 1, 2014, will become Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the Faculty of Business in the College of Arts, Sciences, Business and Education at WSSU on July 16. She also will retain an appointment as an affiliated faculty member of CDI.

"We look forward to Pamela joining WSSU, where she will be another nationally recognized member of our faculty," said Corey Walker, Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, Business and Education at WSSU. "A distinguished scholar and innovator, she brings an impressive body of

work from academe and industry to our university."

Walker and English will jointly head a task force that is being established to examine the future direction of CDI. The task force will include representatives from UNCOSA, WSSU, Forsyth Technical Community College (FTCC), Wake Forest Innovation Quarter, and other educational and community organizations.

The Center for Design Innovation was established in 2005 as a multi-campus research center of the University of North Carolina system, the result of a partnership between UNCOSA and WSSU, campuses of the UNC system, and FTCC, a campus of the N.C. Community College system. CDI's primary goal is to be a catalyst in the economic transformation of the Piedmont Triad through design-focused activity based on advanced digital technologies.

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Pamela L. Jennings, Director of the Center for Design Innovation (CDI), will step down from her post on July 15 to transition to her role as a full-time, tenured professor at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) while officials review future opportunities and direction for the research center.

"Pamela has brought us to a critical juncture in the future of CDI, and we are grateful for her leadership and service," said David English, Interim Provost at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCOSA).

"Now is the time to move forward to more fully integrate the center with



Photo by Timothy Ramsey

At a nearby home, residents and sympathetic citizens give away water, snacks, and fruit to the residents of the Rolling Hills apartment community who need assistance because of the poor quality of water in their homes.

Complex

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agement called the police and accused him of inciting a riot. Allen said that the landlord, Jeremy Cox, decided to involve law enforcement after Allen refused to give him water and food that was intended for the residents.

But Allen wouldn't let that stop him. Instead of giving up, Allen moved just outside the entrance, where a homeowner agreed to let the organization continue their service to those in need.

Although the landlord and representatives from apartment complex owner Aspen Companies declined to comment on the incident, Allen said he would not let negativity stop him.

"We're not going to let them stop us," said Allen.

"We just want justice. These people need help."

Today, the Winston-Salem Federal Credit Union is also scheduled to drop off items to families in need. According to a social media post, along with food and water, the bank also donated towels, bedding and sanitary items.

During a media conference with the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity (MCWSV) last week, city officials announced that Aspen Companies could face fines up to \$350 per day, per unit if repairs aren't made in a timely manner.

"These are unacceptable conditions that you wouldn't want your family to be involved in," said Mayor Allen Joines as he stood behind a podium inside the City Council Chamber.

"This is an area that we are very serious about," he said. "If the property owners don't do what they need to be doing, we are prepared to take the legal action."

Joines also noted that they have had issues with management in the past. In February the city issued a nuisance abatement complaint against property owners citing numerous housing code violations and law enforcement issues.

As of today, Thursday, July 14, owners of the Rolling Hills Apartments Complex, located on Ferrell Court just off New Walkertown Road, have 13 days to make improvements to living units or vacate the property.

Outside of the Ministers' Conference, other faith-based organizations and churches have

joined the effort to help residents as well, including St. Paul United Methodist Church, which is located less than a mile from the complex.

The Rev. Omar Dykes, MSWSV member and pastor of St. John C.M.E. Church, said the conference is pleased with the efforts of city officials and residents.

Third Vice President the Rev. Alvin Carlisle noted that anyone who is looking to help with donations can contact the Ministers' Conference by calling 336-422-6066. He mentioned that although the giving has been generous so far, families are still in need.

"We want the community to know that we are aware of this situation and we are doing everything in our power to help those in need," Carlisle said.



Photo by Tervin Stinson

Longtime community advocate Dave Moore holds a plaque for the Earline Parmon & Dave Moore Scholarship. Moore, a longtime community advocate and founder of Southside Rides, said Parmon a former N.C. lawmaker, was his mentor to whom he often went for advice.

Parmon

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going to college but have a criminal history or don't have the resources to do so.

Moore, who was born in Winston-Salem, said he always looked to Parmon for advice. He mentioned that when he was in prison before opening the shop in 2004, Parmon would accept calls and offer him words of encouragement.

"Just like so many others in this community, she was my mentor," said Moore. "Even though she was busy, she would take the time and talk to me. That was the type of person she was. Always willing to help those in need."

As he sat in front of her picture posted on the wall inside the shop, Moore said, "Parmon played a major role in this becoming a reality."

"I told her I wanted to open an auto body shop while I was in prison, and she supported me all the way," he said. "There aren't many people like her around. She was a real asset to this city."

The city was shaken to its core earlier this year when the former N.C. lawmaker passed away following a brief illness. While she is mostly known for her stint on the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners and for representing the 72nd District in the N.C. House of Representatives, Parmon was also a champion for education. Before exploding onto the political scene, Parmon founded the now defunct LIFT Academy, a charter school that is credited with graduating youth who had been written off by the public school system.

Just days before passing, Parmon was with Moore working out the logistics for the scholarship program. As he reminisced on the good times he spent with his mentor, Moore said he can still hear her voice.

"I can hear her now: 'Dave you better not forget me,'" he laughed. "That's what this is all about, making sure her legacy is never forgotten. That's why I put her name first."

"Although she wore many hats and did a lot of different things, more than anything she cared about the well-being of the youth in this community. I want to make sure that lives on forever."

For more information on the Earline Parmon & Dave Moore Scholarship, contact Dave Moore by phone at 336-995-2809.

www.wschronicle.com

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