62nd Annual
Membership Weekend
April 23-25, 2027

Westin Hotel
Pittsburgh, PA

A CELEBRATION OF THEATRE IN THE CITY OF CHAMPIONS

COLLEGE OF FELLOWS OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE

December E-Newsletter

A Legacy Worth Preserving—A Future Worth Building



Greetings from Colorado!

I hope this December edition of the CoF E-Newsletter finds each of you active, healthy, and enjoying a productive and fulfilling close to the year. As we approach the holiday season and reflect on the months behind us, I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for your continued support, commitment, and engagement with the College. Your dedication to our shared mission, the profession, and the work of the organization remains essential to our collective success. I wish each of you and your families a joyful, peaceful, and glorious holiday season.

As we look toward 2027, however, there is important business before us, and the coming weeks and months will be consequential for the future direction and continued advancement of the College. Several significant matters are currently before the membership, and they will require thoughtful consideration, meaningful discussion, and, most importantly, your active participation. The strength of the College has always rested in the willingness of its members to remain informed, contribute their perspectives, and take an active role in shaping the decisions that affect our organization and its future.

I therefore encourage each of you to read this newsletter carefully and give particular attention to the issues and matters requiring membership input, feedback, or action. Your voice matters, your involvement is valued, and your participation is vital as we work through these important matters together. This is not a time for passive engagement; it is an opportunity for each of us to help ensure that the College remains strong, responsive, forward-looking, and positioned to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Thank you again for your continued confidence, support, and commitment to the College. I look forward to our continued work together and to what we can accomplish as a membership in the year ahead.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!



From *Gazette* Editor & Dean-Elect Heather Nathans

Many thanks to the Fellows who participated in the Fall 2026 Roundtable. After navigating some health challenges over the past few months, I look forward to sharing their insights into how they find joy in their work in the weeks ahead.

I'm also delighted to report that the journal, Theatre and Performance: Notes and Counternotes (Theatre and Performance Notes and Counternotes), has expressed an interest in making our Roundtables a regular feature, which I hope will be a wonderful opportunity to share the ongoing work of the College of Fellows.

And I want to offer a special thanks to the colleagues who participated in the Gazette issue concerning the future of DEIJ in U.S. theatre that was published in the Journal of American Drama and Theatre. I recently received an email from someone who said that the article had inspired her to start looking into PhD programs. Thank you to all the Fellows who have been part of our Roundtable conversations so far — and here's to many more productive and inspirational collaborations!

As always, if you have news of recent honors, awards, productions, publications, or other professional accomplishments, please send them to fellowsgazette@gmail.com.

Production and publication announcements can also be submitted to Kristy Simpson or me via fellowsgazette@gmail.com for inclusion on the College's Facebook page.

COLLEGE DUES & FINANCIAL UPDATE: YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Since my September update, I am delighted to report that 52 Fellows have now stepped forward to support the College by paying their annual dues for 2026–2027! This is encouraging progress, and I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has already made this commitment.

As I have emphasized in previous communications, establishing annual dues as our first guaranteed source of recurring revenue represents an important milestone in strengthening the College's financial future. For the first time, we have an opportunity to build a more predictable and dependable financial foundation—one that allows us to plan ahead, meet our ongoing obligations, support our programs and activities, and pursue new opportunities for the benefit of our entire membership.

This is about more than simply paying annual dues. It is about investing in the organization we value, demonstrating our collective commitment, and ensuring that the College remains financially healthy and positioned for continued growth. The strength of this initiative depends on all of us participating.

If you have not yet paid your 2026–2027 dues, I strongly encourage you to do so as soon as possible. You can easily make your payment through the College's website or by using one of the convenient links provided at the end of this document.

To those who have already contributed, thank you! Your willingness to embrace this important initiative is both remarkable and deeply appreciated. To those who have not yet participated, I hope you will join your fellow Fellows in helping us build a stronger, more financially secure College.

Every Fellow's participation matters. Together, we can turn this important first step into a lasting source of financial strength and stability for our College.

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DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE AND BUILDING A LASTING LEGACY

The David and Dawn Grapes College of Fellows Endowment Fund
I am delighted to announce that, thanks to the continued generosity of our members, the David and Dawn Grapes College of Fellows Endowment Fund has achieved its initial goal of $50,000—and continues to grow! This is an exciting milestone for our College. The interest generated by this endowment is designated to help support our annual Fellows Weekend, providing a more dependable source of funding for one of our most important annual traditions.

But we don't want to stop here! Our goal is to continue growing this fund so that it can provide even greater support for Fellows Weekend in the years ahead. I invite you to become part of this growing legacy. If you would like to make a contribution or learn more about how you can help expand the endowment, please contact me directly at davidgrapes@yahoo.com. Every additional contribution helps strengthen this important resource for future generations of Fellows.

THE LEGACY GIFT PROGRAM: MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT LAST BEYOND YOUR LIFETIME

The College has also established an exciting new Legacy Gift Program, offering Fellows a meaningful opportunity to pay it forward and ensure that their commitment to the College continues well into the future.

Through wills, bequests, and estate planning, you can designate a future gift to the College and direct your contribution toward an area that is especially meaningful to you. Whether your passion is supporting Fellows Weekend, educational initiatives, emerging theatre artists, or the ongoing work of the College, a legacy gift allows you to help shape its future.

Consider the impact your generosity could have on the next generation of theatre professionals. You don't have to make a commitment today to begin the conversation. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you personally, answer your questions, and explore the possibilities. Please contact me directly if you would like to learn more about establishing a Legacy Gift.

USE THE FULL (TAX-FREE!) POWER OF YOUR IRA

Did you know that your IRA can become a powerful tool for supporting the College of Fellows—without increasing your taxable income?

If you are age 70½ or older, you may be eligible to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from your IRA to the College of Fellows. Under current IRS rules, you can transfer funds directly to an eligible charitable organization, up to the applicable annual limit, without having the distribution included in your taxable income. Your gift may also satisfy all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

This is an especially attractive way to support the College because it allows you to make a meaningful charitable contribution using funds you may already be required to withdraw from your retirement account.

Don't overlook this opportunity to make your charitable dollars work harder! A conversation with your financial advisor or tax professional can help determine whether this strategy is right for you. If you would like to explore how an IRA charitable gift could benefit the College, please contact me directly at davidgrapes@yahoo.com.

A FINAL THOUGHT:

The financial future of the College of Fellows is something we build together. Whether through an endowment contribution, a legacy gift, or an IRA charitable distribution, each of us has an opportunity to make a lasting difference.

I encourage you not to put off that conversation. Please reach out to me personally. Let's explore how your generosity can help ensure that the College continues to thrive, celebrate excellence, and support the future of our profession for many years to come.

Thank you for believing in the College and for helping ensure that its future remains strong.

2026–2027 Recommended Dues & Donation Options

Your continued investment in the College makes all of this work possible.
Recommended Dues: $250

Wix:
Pay Recommended Dues through the College website

PayPal:
Pay through PayPal

Zelle:
970-219-4352

Checks:
College of Fellows
P.O. Box 430
Windsor, CO 80550-0430

Help Us Grow Our Social Media Presence

The College's Facebook page now has more than 300 active followers. Let's keep building that audience.

Please visit the College's Facebook page and invite your theatre colleagues and Facebook friends to follow us. And remember: if you have an announcement, production, publication, award, or other news you would like to share, simply send the information to Kristy Simpson or me, and we will post it.

Every new follower helps expand the College's visibility and our ability to advocate for the American theatre.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:
HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF YOUR COLLEGE OF FELLOWS!

New Board Members Needed

The College of Fellows thrives because of the commitment, leadership, and shared vision of its members. Now is your opportunity to help shape its future!
We invite all Fellows to participate in the nomination process for four new members of the Board of Fellows. Serving on the Board is a meaningful opportunity to contribute your experience, ideas, and professional perspective to the continued growth and success of our College. We encourage you to think about colleagues whose leadership, enthusiasm, and commitment would make them valuable additions to the Board—and to consider putting your own name forward as well!

How the Nomination and Election Process Works

In accordance with the College's Bylaws, the Board of Fellows will solicit nominations from the membership to fill the four vacancies. Following the nomination period, the Board will review the names submitted and contact prospective candidates to request a personal Statement of Service outlining their interest in serving and the contributions they hope to make.

Following the Board's review, the nominees' names, biographies, and Statements of Service will be shared with the entire membership. Fellows will then have the opportunity to elect the four new Board members through a virtual ballot distributed prior to the Annual Meeting.

The three year terms of the newly elected Board members will commence at the next Board Meeting in May 2027.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

The strength of the College of Fellows comes from the active participation of its members. Whether you nominate an outstanding colleague or put your own name forward for consideration, your involvement helps ensure that our Board reflects the talent, diversity of experience, and dedication of our extraordinary membership.
Please take this opportunity to participate. Help us identify the leaders who will guide our College into its next chapter!

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS FEBRUARY 1, 2027

Submit Board nomination materials to Kristy Simpson at: ksimpsoncof@gmail.com

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:
HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF YOUR COLLEGE OF FELLOWS!

New Fellows Nomination Process:

March 1, 2027 will be the deadline for nominations from College of Fellows at large to be considered for the 2028 Class of Fellows. All current Fellows are encouraged to place in nomination those persons she/he/they believes are deserving of membership in the College of Fellows of the American Theatre.

To access submission guidelines, or to download the blank Fellows Nomination Form, you must first log into our official website at: https://www.thecollegeoffellows.org. Next, click on MEMBERSHIP located at the top of the page. Then, click on Members Area in the drop-down menu. Finally, enter the following password to gain full access: *lorenwinship*. Please do not share this password as it is confidential.

Feel free to email Kristy Simpson a: ksimpsoncof@gmail.com should you encounter any issues in the process.



Strategic Alliances: Building Connections Across the American Theatre

As you know our Strategic Alliance Coordinators have been working to connect and/or strengthen our established connections to like-minded arts/theatre organizations. While this effort has been met with success in most cases, there are a few groups we have not been able to reach successfully. Knowing that many Fellows are simultaneously members/leaders of other organizations we ask now if any Fellows who are members of the following groups or who have strong connections with the leadership of these groups might be willing to join us in helping to connect/strengthen our strategic alliances with them.

- Theatre Communications Group. TCG
- Association of Arts Administration Educators. AAAE
- United States Institute for Theatre Technology. USITT

If you know of an organization that might be interested in participating in the College's Strategic Alliance Initiative, please contact Michael Hood at michaeljameshood@gmail.com.

August Wilson Fellowship Enters Its Third Year



20267August Wilson Fellowship Applications:

Applications for the 2027 August Wilson Fellowship in Theatrical Production for Students of Color in Design and Theatre Technology at the O'Neil Center are now available through February 15, 2027, online.
https://www.thecollegeoffellows.org/aw-fellowship-application
Please share the embedded link below with your colleagues, with students who may be interested, and with your full range of networks. I urge you to include a personal note of invitation and encouragement to those on your distribution list.

Note: While there is sufficient funding for 2027, the College needs additional donations to fund the Fellowship for 2028. Please contact Bonnie Nelson Swartz at: bnelsonschwartz@gmail.com, if you wish to donate to the Fellowship or serve on the August Wilson Fundraising Committee.



FELLOWS WEEKEND APRIL 23-25, 2027



Get ready for an exciting and memorable weekend in Pittsburgh! Your Board and I have been working hard to create an exceptional experience for you at the spectacular Westin Hotel in the heart of the City of Champions.

For our Third Annual Fellows Weekend outside of the Kennedy Center, I am especially pleased to announce an exciting new partnership with the August Wilson African American Cultural Center. Together, we are planning a wonderful weekend filled with opportunities to reconnect with fellow Fellows, celebrate our community, and enjoy all that Pittsburgh has to offer.

As we did for last year's Fellows Weekend in Denver, there will be one standard registration fee of $250 for all current Fellows and their guests. This fee helps cover the many ancillary expenses associated with producing our 62nd Fellows Weekend, including meeting room rentals, catering, audiovisual equipment and technical support, printing, photography, and other essential event services.

As in previous years, registration fees will be waived for the inductees in the Class of 2027. However, guests of members of the Class of 2027 will be required to pay the $250 registration fee and may participate in all Fellows Weekend activities.

Mark your calendars and save the date! Formal registration will open on December 15. We look forward to welcoming you to Pittsburgh for what promises to be another outstanding Fellows Weekend!

2027 FELLOWS WEEKEND:
A WEEKEND OF CELEBRATION, CONNECTION & INSPIRATION!

We have an exciting weekend planned, filled with opportunities to reconnect with colleagues, explore Pittsburgh's rich theatrical and cultural heritage, and celebrate the newest members of our College of Fellows!

Friday, April 23 & Saturday, April 24

The weekend will feature a dynamic lineup of activities, including:

- The Executive Board Meeting.
- A guided tour of Pittsburgh aboard Molly's Trolley.
- A special behind-the-scenes tour of the August Wilson Archives.
- An opportunity to hear from our 2026 August Wilson Fellowship recipient Camiilo Ramos regarding his experiences at the O'Neill Center last summer
- An engaging Roundtable discussion featuring distinguished Pittsburgh theatre professionals.
- A tour of the August Wilson African American Cultural Center.
- A festive reception welcoming and celebrating the Class of 2027 as we prepare for Sunday's Investiture.



Trolly Tour



August Wilson African American Cultural Center

HOTEL RESERVATIONS – THE WESTIN PITTSBURGH

We have secured a special College of Fellows room rate of $189 per night at the Westin. Please use the exclusive reservation link below to book your accommodations:

CLICK HERE TO RESERVE YOUR ROOM AT THE COF SPECIAL RATE

IMPORTANT: PLEASE BOOK DIRECTLY THROUGH OUR COLLEGE RESERVATION LINK.

Please do not use third-party booking agencies or reservation services to secure your room at the Westin. Our hotel contract requires us to meet a minimum number of room nights. Reservations made outside our designated room block may not count toward that commitment and could ultimately result in additional costs to the College. Your cooperation is extremely important. Please use the reservation link above to secure your room for April and help us fulfill our hotel commitment.

Sunday, April 25

Sunday will be highlighted by our Annual Business Meeting, followed by the eagerly anticipated Investiture Luncheon. We are particularly honored to welcome the legendary Broadway and television actress and director, and member of the Class of 2027, Phylicia Rashad, as our featured speaker for the 2027 Roger L. Stevens Address. This promises to be a very special highlight of our weekend!

A VERY SPECIAL ROGER L. STEVENS ADDRESS: PHYLICIA RASHAD!



Get ready for an extraordinary highlight of our 2027 Fellows Weekend in Pittsburgh! We are honored to welcome the incomparable Phylicia Rashad—legendary Broadway and television actress, acclaimed director, educator, and distinguished member of the Class of 2027—as our featured speaker for the 2027 Roger L. Stevens Address.

A celebrated artist whose remarkable career has helped shape American theatre and television, Phylicia Rashad brings a wealth of experience, artistry, insight, and inspiration to the stage. From her unforgettable performances on Broadway to her groundbreaking work in television and her continued contributions as a director and mentor, she represents the very best of our profession.

This is a rare opportunity to hear one of our generation's most respected theatrical artists share her perspectives, experiences, and vision with the College of Fellows.

Don't miss this special moment! Join us in Pittsburgh this April for an unforgettable weekend of celebration, fellowship, and inspiration—and an extraordinary opportunity to hear Phylicia Rashad!

Registration Fee $250.00 per Fellow and $250.00 per each guest.
All Fellows and guests, including the Class of 2027
are invited to participate in all events.

Registration will open on December 15, 2026 via google form.



TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
FELLOWS WEEKEND 2027
PITTSBURGH, PA



Friday, April 23

(Optional Activities for those who arrive on Thursday or early Friday)
Fellows Arrive in Pittsburgh
Molley's Trolley Tour
Tour of August Wilson Archives
Attend theatre

Saturday April 24, 2027

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Tour of August Wilson African American Cultural Center
11:30 AM – 12:45 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Dynamic Dialogue August Wilson Fellowship updates with Camillo Ramos Moderated by Dean Emerita Sandra Shannon at the AWAACC
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Roundtable featuring 4 Pittsburgh area theatre artists plus a guest moderator at the AWAACC
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM	Reception for the Class of 2027 at the Westin Hotel

Sunday April 25, 2027

10:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Annual Business Meeting at the Westin Hotel
11:30 AM – 2:30 PM	Investiture Luncheon and Roger L. Stevens Address at The Westin Hotel

FELLOWS
CLASS OF 2027



AARON ANDERSON



JAN DU PLAIN



GARY GARRISON



EMILY MANN



STEPHEN MCKINLEY HENDERSON



SUSAN MICKEY



CAMERON JACKSON



LYNNE KURDZIEL-FORMATO



PHYLICIA RASHAD



SAUL RUBINEK



KATE SNODGRASS

In Memoriam:

George Judy (2013) died 9/24/ 2026.

John Warren Frick, Jr. (2017) died 4/25/26

John M. Ezell (2004) died 9/26/26

Please email me any additional names of Fellows that may have died this year and I will include them in the In Memoriam tribute at Fellows Weekend in April.





