



For Immediate Release

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Acclaimed Author Walter Dean Myers, National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, appearing at Hill House, Elsie H. Hillman Auditorium, Sunday, February 12, 2012, 2:30 p.m. with Illustrator & Son, Christopher Myers, and their new book, WE ARE AMERICA

(Pittsburgh, Pa.) – Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures and Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh are pleased to announce a *Black, White & Read All Over* season finale collaboration with the Hill House Association. The three organizations, with additional support from Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, will welcome acclaimed author Walter Dean Myers and his son, Caldecott Honor artist, Christopher Myers, to the Elsie H. Hillman Auditorium in the Hill House Kaufmann Center, 1825 Centre Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, on Sunday, February 12, 2012, at 2:30 p.m.

The same father-son team who created *Harlem* and *Jazz* now celebrates the essence of the American dream in *We Are America*, a bestselling book for children and families that portrays both our struggles and our ideals, and is a tribute to America's strength in diversity. What is it to be an American in a multicultural society? Walter Dean Myers' eloquent poetry and Chris Myers' powerful illustrations each offer answers that resonate across cultural divides.

Kirkus Reviews praises the collaboration: "The poetry and the paintings will be an excellent jumping-off point for discussions. Readers will take every opportunity to pause and reflect and trace their fingers along the glorious artwork. Stunning."

Just named the new National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, Walter Dean Myers has tackled difficult subjects, including gang violence, war, and race relations in his poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. His works range from adult texts to children's picture books, and he has long been embraced for his poetic, yet candid, literary portraits of our times. His award-winning young adult book, *Monster*, is part of the middle school curriculum across the country and here in Pittsburgh.

For most of his life, Walter Dean Myers has been on a mission to convince American families that reading is a survival skill. In last month's interview with the *New York Times* about his role as National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, Walter Dean Myers said, "I think that what we need to do is say reading is going to really affect your life... You take a black man who doesn't have a job, but you say to him, 'Look, you can make a difference in your child's life, just be reading to him for 30 minutes a day.' That's what I would like to do."

The program with Walter Dean Myers and Chris Myers at the Hill House, Sunday, February 12, will include a presentation, interactive art activity, audience Q&A, book signing, and snacks. A student singing group from East Liberty Presbyterian Church's Hope Academy will offer family entertainment, beginning at 2:00 p.m., with original vocal arrangements of some hit songs.

Tickets (\$5-\$10) will be available at the door. Photographers are welcome.

Black, White & Read All Over is presented by Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures in partnership with Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Support for the series is provided by UPMC Health Plan, The Grable Foundation, and the Elsie H. Hillman Foundation. Book sales are provided by Penguin Bookshop, Sewickley.

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About Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures:

Founded in 1991, Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures is a non-profit 501(c)(3) literary, performing arts organization, as designated by the City of Pittsburgh. The unique mission of Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures is to connect world-class authors and their work with the local community and, in doing so, to elevate the quality of civic discourse in Pittsburgh through the presentation and discussion of the universal human values of literature. Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures produces an annual series of literary lectures sponsored by The Drue Heinz Trust. In addition, the organization produces a literary series for children and families in partnership with Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, as well as special events featuring niche writers and storytellers, with the purpose of encouraging interest in the lifelong pursuit of reading.

About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh:

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh contributes to the educational attainment, economic development, and cultural enrichment of the region. Through critical services such as early learning programs for children, job search assistance and computer and Internet access, the Library fosters lifelong learning and is a renowned leader among the nation's libraries. With more than 2 million visitors and 3.5 million items borrowed each year, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region's most visited asset and one of the largest public libraries in Pennsylvania. Established in 1895 by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie as a public trust to be funded by the community, the Library derives approximately 90% of its annual operating budget from public or government sources, including the Allegheny County Regional Asset District (RAD), the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Pittsburgh.

About Hill House Association:

The Hill House Association is an independent nonprofit organization offering a wide range of programs and services to Pittsburgh's Hill District community and surrounding areas. Through its unique multi-generational service model, dedicated staff, and redevelopment efforts, the Hill House continues to positively impact the futures of the residents and communities it serves.

About Kelly Strayhorn Theater:

Kelly Strayhorn Theater encourages diverse, inclusive and high quality, artistic, cultural and educational activities. By nurturing these pursuits, Kelly Strayhorn Theater contributes to cultural understanding, quality of life, as well as economic development in community, county, city and region. Kelly Strayhorn Theater is a unique and vibrant community performance arts center located in the heart of East Liberty, one of Pittsburgh's most historic neighborhoods. Drawing audiences from throughout the city, the theater offers original and eclectic programming year-round.